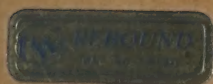


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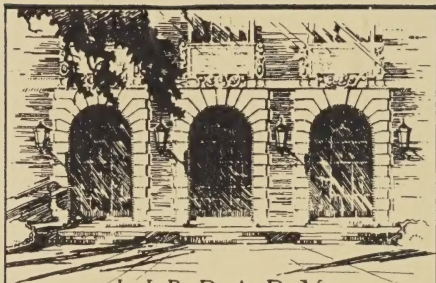


THE MAN



For Wheeler,

The Soldier—The Statesman



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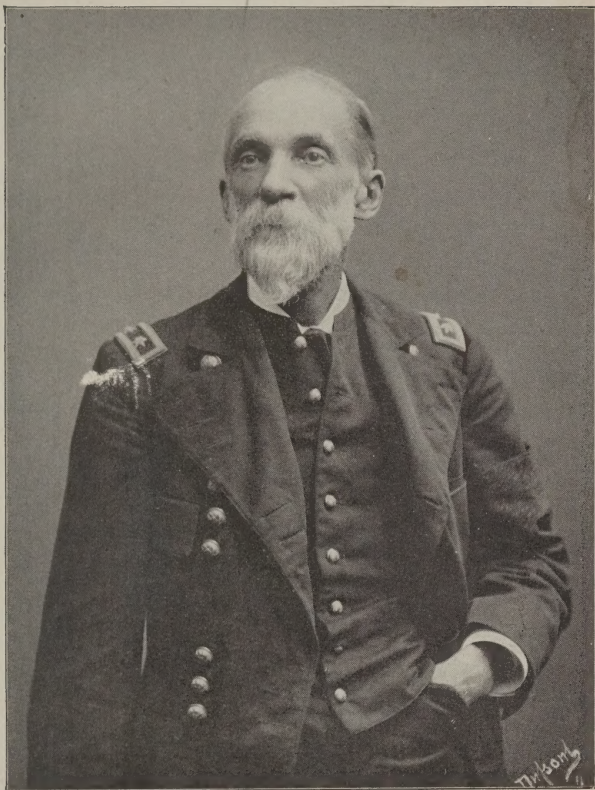
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Foran, John,

In his "Working Clothes," at Montauk.

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JOSEPH WHEELER,

THE MAN,
THE STATESMAN,
THE SOLDIER,

SEEN IN SEMI-BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES.

By T. C. DE LEON,

AUTHOR OF "FOUR YEARS IN REBEL CAPITALS," "CRAG NEST; THE
ROMANCE OF SHERIDAN'S RIDE," "JOHN HOLDEN, UNIONIST,"
"THE PURITAN'S DAUGHTER," ETC., ETC.

*Comrade, thy hand ! The more thy tale I scan,
The more it gives assurance of a Man.*

[CAROLABROR.]

ATLANTA, GA.
BYRD PRINTING CO.,
1899

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THIS book does not purport to be a "biography" of General Wheeler.

Far less does it aspire to be a "history" of the great events, over which he rose to noted leadership in the Lost Cause; or of those later ones he surmounted to become, in time of profound peace, a leader of the reunited Nation.

Least of all does it attempt to settle the still mooted details of that hot—if brief—campaign in Cuba, still before the eyes of our people in almost actuality.

Biographies of living men are ever tinctured with prejudice, for or against their subjects. Too frequently they descend into mere laudation, or detraction; rarely do they weigh the good and the bad in all mortals, with those nicest balanced scales, which alone hold "the truth of history."

History itself can only emerge from close and analytical study of facts that have grown cold. When I essayed the story of the Confederacy, in "Four Years in Rebel Capitals"—twenty-five years after its collapse—I found the facts still too hot for judicious handling, and confined that book's scope to sketches of episodes. As said in its preface, it was both too early and too late for "history."

The heat of passion and of sympathy forbid the temperate handling of events by men of their hour. Rarely indeed has any universally accepted historical paper been written by a participant in the events of which it treats, or by one directly affected by their results.

History must be "Philosophy teaching by example;" but, to reach her highest values, it must be the example of others.

Time, research, analysis, rare power of statement and—above all—unswerving sense of justice, are demanded of him who aspires to write history. He must retire self and most of the human emotions and replace them by judgment alone.

Feeling all this truth—yet feeling that some things had been left unsaid of the typical American of today—I wrote this brief sketch—"another book about Joe Wheeler!" It strives to show him rather as *the man* than as the hero. It uses my own long memory of him, to temper the memories and the experiences of others.

If it bring him the least bit closer to the vast national population, on whose every tongue his name is today; if it can make "the little hero" walk among them, without yellow sash or stainless sabre, denuded of the glamor of victory and removed from the blare of Fame's trumpet; if, attempting this, I make one more true man love him more—then this booklet has done its whole duty and has well repaid all the care and labor it cost.

T. C. DE LEON.

Atlanta, Ga., March 15th, 1899.



TO
THE TRUE DAUGHTER
OF A TRUE SIRE, WHO LEFT HER HOME
OF EASE TO FACE DANGERS, FOR DUTY'S SAKE,
THIS MEMOIR OF HER FATHER
IS DEDICATED,

JOSEPH WHEELER.

I.—THE MAN AS HE IS.

WHEN some great action, or a succession of them, concentrates the public gaze upon any man, we Americans are wont to look at him through one lens. So we get a profile view of him, or at best a flat picture, in place of the rounded actuality of the stereoscope.

Of late the public eye has been very full of General Joseph Wheeler. First it was riveted upon the modest, reticent and self-contained little lieutenant, who gave up his life-dream of service in his chosen cavalry arm, for what he believed to be simple duty, but what his own stainless sword carved into a fame that alone had made his name immortal. Next, a people began to look curiously at a new light in legislation and statesmanship; until it shone with a clear and steady light that held them, and—reflected back upon a score of years of arduous service—yet showed not one smirch upon it. Later still, one name resounded clear above the crack of Mauser guns, the victorious roar of answering

JOSEPH WHEELER.

American cannon and the wild acclaim of American victory, until the national gaze concentrated upon one man as the pivotal soldier of that war—and still so holds him.

Latest of all, those eyes of a whole people grew misty, from universal public sympathy, as he sat at his duty, under the shadow of a sorrow unspeakable. That great public heart, which was full of the pride in his public achievement, now beats with tempered and tenderer throbs for the man himself—for his gallant young soldier son—for those noble and helpful daughters, who sit at his knees in the ashes of desolation.

And still the man himself is but a name to the vast majority of his fellows, even while the soldier is their pride and exemplar. Yet this simple and modest Alabamian is a marked and picturesque personality, beyond all glamor of two-fold military glory, and far out of hearing of the echoing guns of 1871, or their re-echoes from San Juan hill.

His are a nervous force, a quick intellectuality and a restless energy—and chiefest an absolute honesty of purpose—that meet all obstacles of life with the vigorous certainty of their surmounting.

Great soldier as he is—by instinct, education and experience—"Joe" Wheeler is also the student, the educator, the man of affairs—lawyer, law-maker and successful politician. But few peer through

THE MAN AS HE IS.

the lurid, if glorious, smoke of Cuban battle fields—through the time-thinned wreaths from those of fraternal strife—even to recall that he is the *doyen* of the national legislature; or to consider the causes that made him so. For, since the death of Mr. Holman, he is the oldest member of congress by continuous service, commencing with his first election in 1880. Technical enactment may have vacated his seat, but the logic of justice—the voice of his own people, rising from their hearts as the *vox dei*, reclaims him as their true and actual representative.

Few, perhaps, of Joseph Wheeler's warmest admirers recall the steady and untiring, while quiet and unostentatious, activity of his long congressional life. Beginning in conscientious effort for betterment of his own people—and for justice to all the people—it has ever sought result and achieved it for his section, rather than popular applause. It is not of record that it ever sought personal gain, or political advancement, but it *has* sought "the greatest good of the greatest number;" and has brought "the working member" so close to his direct constituency—and to all the people of his state—that neither time, absence nor intrigue could divorce them.

General Wheeler, from instinct, military training and later experience in the Capital whirlpool, is a

JOSEPH WHEELER.

keen and quick judge of human nature; a faculty to which may be traced much of his career's success. He is as frank as he is fearless; outspoken, to the verge of bluntness, and never hesitant of speech for what he believes to be the right. The courage of his convictions is, in him, great enough to force respect for the convictions of others; but with it he combines a tenderness of heart, an ever-awake sympathy for others—which regards neither personality or environment.

The negroes about his district hold him much as they do "Marse Linkum." They have a nebulous knowledge that the latter gave them their freedom; and they hold the patent and practical one that Wheeler helps them to something to feed its frequently recurrent hunger. They are, of course, his political opponents in most cases; but they come to him with their grievances about pensions or aught else, as they never did to their "representatives" of reconstruction days. And they come with very different result; for—be a claim of any kind honest and just—Congressman Wheeler takes it up with the same impetuosity and persistence he was wont to carry to the old time charge in battle; and he is almost as sure to win on the latter field as on the former. Populist opponents and even republican rivals have not failed to use his good offices; and anecdotes innumerable are current

THE MAN AS HE IS.

in the "old eighth district" of favors he has done all classes.

A friend of the writer—and a staunch one of the general—was riding through the district during a campaign where Wheeler had vicious opposition. He stopped at the house of a former republican leader, who was this time all for Wheeler. To sound him, the visitor began doubtful talk about the general's chance of winning; even comparing him, to his disadvantage, with his opponent. Then the rough host rose in his wrath, declaring that no man should talk in that way of "little Joe Wheeler," under his roof.

"Why, man, you have said far worse things than that about him," urged his tormentor.

"Mebbe I hev, mebbe I hain't," retorted the somewhat crestfallen Wheelerite. "But, mark, I ain't a-sayin' of 'em now! Joe Wheeler got me my rights, through congris, w'en ther whole pack o' my own stripe jest promised an' lied! See *this!*"

He pulled from the pocket of his brown shirt a thumbed and worn letter; holding it before the eyes of his visitor as he added, in a tone between awe and surprise:

"An' hinged ef he hain't writ it with his own han'; and he got me my money, too!"

The other, to test him still further, suggested he would like to borrow the letter; but the late republican roared:

JOSEPH WHEELER.

"Borry *that!* Borry the letter Jo writ ter *me!* Wy, man! I'd liefer len' yer my marridge certif'kit!"

One Sunday, in later time, an old and well-known negro—who may be called Zeke here—appeared on the depot platform of his village in array to suggest "Solomon in all his glory." Ever before known as the slouchiest and most unneat of darkies, Zeke now sported "biled" linen, the long black frock that is acmé of dingy ambition, and a slick silk hat. The crowd of worse dressed negroes eyed him with equal envy and pride, from afar off, as he strutted the platform. Presently a white acquaintance recognized the old bird under his new plumage, and cried:

"Hello, Zeke! where did you get those fine clothes?"

"War I'se got 'um?" the old black answered, with the indirectness of his race. "War yo' think I'se got 'um, boss? Wy, I'se got 'um from Marse Jinral Jo Weeler! All dem reppublikin memmers of congris dun promis Zeke, all dese year, ter git his penshun, and den day git him nothin'. Den, wen I'se gone an' ingrashiated dat penshun wid Marse Jinral Jo Weeler, de money fur hit jus' came right 'long in no time. Dem's talkin', dey is; but da wite man wuk, *he* do! Da's were dese close cum frum, boss; an' Gawd bress Jinral Jo, fur *he's* de one help de po' nigger!"

THE MAN AS HE IS.

Endless such incidents show the reasons for the love and loyalty that surround Joseph Wheeler, the man, in his home district. They show his earnestness, his industry and his loyalty to the trust in his hands; that no man who has a wrong to right, or any claim upon his public service, finds his back turned upon him, be that applicant black, white or piebald; be he friend or political opponent.

Nor is his usefulness confined to his own district, or even to his own state. Members from other states ask the aid of his influence, of his foresight, judgment and rare knowledge of statistics, in pushing local measures of their own; and they never ask in vain, and almost always to their profit.

Added to this knowledge of the public man, is that of his beautiful and blameless domestic life. At this, no political rivalry, pique or disappointment has ever cast one slur. The beautiful simplicity of perfect love and perfect sympathy that binds that home circle has gleaned forth and glorified it abroad. Its head is revered and idolized by all the rest, while his own life shows respect and love and tenderness for each of them, equal to their own.

Such are the traits and methods that have placed this simple minded great man in the hearts of his constituents; and which hold him there ineradicably. Doubtless the glamor of his dashing war

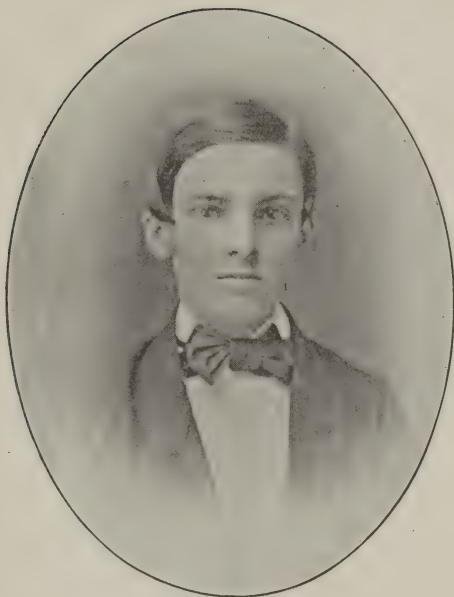
JOSEPH WHEELER.

record was his stepping stone at the outset. If so, it is all the more to his credit that he has never *traded* upon that, even remotely. He seized new circumstances as they arose, and builded a new—and wholly different—reputation by his use of them.

Even did limits of a brief sketch permit, detailed differentiation of his character-traits would scarce fit in here. They are left for the biographer; only such salient ones as point the whole having been noted.

Of this man's courage, endurance and truth there is no need to speak. They shine about his daily walk, making it bright and clean in the eyes of men.

He is a reverent and religious man, too. Brought up in the Episcopal faith, he is a member of that church—not merely in form, but in fact. With nothing of cant, of hypocrisy, or of "religion's" too frequent acrimony about him, Joseph Wheeler still *acts* out his tenets; and lets his life, rather than his words, proclaim him the Christian gentleman. In the hurry of the campaign, the quiet of his tent, the hot rush of the charge, or at the bier of his lost beloved ones, the old warrior looks to The Master for aid, for inspiration and for comfort. In the worry, wear and annoyance of a close political campaign, he relies upon what he believes to be



From an early Ambrotype.

JOSEPH WHEELER.

At 15; when he entered as a private in the
Grand Army of Workers.

THE MAN AS HE IS.

the justice and truth of his cause ; never descending to personality, but trusting to argument. It is not written in his long public record, military or civil, that he has wittingly done injustice to an opponent. Neither is it known that he ever debased the hustings by the "catchy" vulgarity of the dubious stories and jokes, too common to them ; or that he has ever broken one pledge to his supporters, thence made.

Physically small, though wiry and enduring, he rises above mere stature in the eyes of those who hear him speak in the fervid eloquence of plain honesty. Mentally, he towers over the stalwart men about him, as a veritable son of Anak.

Briefly to sum him up : Joseph Wheeler is that rare combination—a gentleman of the old school, grafted upon the progressive man of today—which makes him the typical American he is. That combination, to borrow of the playwright, is only written by the hand of the Omnipotent, signed man, and sealed gentleman.

II.—EARLIER DAYS.

If it be really true that “the child is father to the man,” then that strange auto-parentage need have had little regret in sparing the rod during Joseph Wheeler’s youth.

Spite of long and good descent, on both sides of his family, the subject of this sketch is practically a “self-made man.” This irony of circumstance is set forth elsewhere ; but result shows that he had cause to thank himself for the making, and Circumstance for the opportunity.

He was markedly an “old-man boy” in some regards. Not that his early youth was joyless, or free from the whims and sports—which make their happiness—of all boys. But, removed from home-ties at tender years—and early sent up against a strange and peculiarly hard world, on his own account, as a bread-winner—the serious side of life began to project light shadows across the full sunshine of youth, earlier with him than with most boys—and especially most boys of southern birth.

In a chapter devoted to his family, some causes of this will be seen ; as well as how the young native Georgian found his way to the Military Academy as a New Yorker. At West Point he was not

EARLIER DAYS.

shown any special grace, or exemption from the customary hazing of "plebes." Indeed his grave demeanor and his small size made him a favorite target for the not always gentle "jokes and tricks" of cadet life. But he bore these small slings and arrows of outrageous fortune with the calm of that innate philosophy which has shown so steadily through all his subsequent career. For—while it is not of record that Joseph Wheeler ever let an intentional affront pass unresented—it is notable that his naturally nervous temperament calms into the phlegmaatic under provocation. The strategic vein deep under his surface rashness that makes him a dangerous opponent, makes him also a philosopher under the needle pricks of every day life.

There is parallel in him to Napoleon. The natures of both men show nervous quickness and prompt grasp. At Brienne, too, the youthful Corsican foreshadowed his meteor career; the soldier instinct born with him dominating his juvenile days and early studies. And at West Point, Wheeler was not regarded as a peculiarly bright student, in some lines of the course. He was introspective, and his bent was for tactics.

This showed in early childhood. The born soldier and leader cropped out through all his boyish sports; and the "mud-pie" and "sand-foot" of the ordinary urchin became with him the trench, the coun-

JOSEPH WHEELER.

terscarp and the redoubt. It was his early delight to marshal and drill his little playmates; to dominate and lead them—though ever with the kindly severity he showed afterwards to his men in the army, and to his “boys” in Wheeler’s Cavalry.

Care and precept alike failed to divert the boy from this inborn mastery. Argument, promises and threats of dire future disaster availed nothing to change his fixed intent to get into the United States army, by *some* means—vague and nebulous as were his ideas of what, where, or when those means might be. History was merely repeating herself in his case; for she shows us how most great generals of the middle and remote past evinced their natural trend, when mere toddlers. Indeed, from her examples it is deducible that infant Joshua gazed with indescribable longing at the sun, when “scrapping” with his smaller playmates; or that Cyrus never went to the zoo without strange longing to ride the baby elephant.

But in Joseph Wheeler’s case, the history is in plain sight and vouched for by men still living; one of them being the friendly ex-congressman, with coincidental name, to whose kindness and perspicacity in sending him to the Point the two latest wars of this country are indebted for one of their greatest soldiers.

EARLIER DAYS.

Cadet Wheeler entered the Academy in July, 1854; about the time of changing its course to the five year term. He early became corporal and rose to a class-company lieutenancy; and early and late he imbibed thirstily all the military side of the instruction, and was an omnivorous student, not only of practical military science, but also of every book on war that he could lay his hands upon. Withal he was a docile, obedient and punctilious pupil; rarely deserving a demerit, and equally patient and courteous with professors and classmates.

There is a strong streak of philosophy in this same great soldier; and, parallel with it there runs all through his nature a broader streak of brave humility and charity and forbearance, which may be named, and not irreverently, the Christianity of human nature. At that time, too, Robert E. Lee—then captain of engineers—was superintendent of the Academy; and some of General Wheeler's friends pretend to trace a vast deal of the best in him to the example of that great soldier and noble gentleman. But in very fact, the Lee of that day had not shown the full fruition of the goodness in him, any more than he had of the greatness. Moreover, none who know the real relation of cadet and commandant will assert that they were close enough together, nor often enough, for great absorption of personal example by one from the other.

JOSEPH WHEELER.

This will incline the thinker to believe that the better traits shown by the cadet were not refractive, but merely early buds of the real, and then undeveloped, Wheeler.

It chanced that some old playmates and chums of the writer were at the Academy at this time, or a little later; and from them he heard much of "Point Wheeler." Ignorance of class nomenclature caused the idea that this was because he was at West Point; and only on meeting them all later was it explained to be because his classmates averred he was "so little that he had neither length, breadth, nor thickness."

Many men who later rose to great fame in war were at the academy during Cadet Wheeler's term. One of these—though only for a year—was another native Georgian and born cavalry leader, who rose to corps command in the third year of "the brothers' war"—Pierce M. B. Young. Another, who became a noted cavalry general on the Union side, was General Wilson, the raider; and still another Wilson, General John M., now chief of engineers, was his friend, though in the class below. Two gallant ex-Confeds, alluded to as the author's friends, and the ones who first introduced him to the future lieutenant-general, were Colonel Wade Hampton Gibbes, of South Carolina, and Major Frank Huger, of the same state.

EARLIER DAYS.

General Merritt, General A. C. M. Pennington, now commanding the Department of the Gulf, and many others, were at the Point at the same time; but none of his own class reached in any way the later fame of reticent and mild-mannered "Point" Wheeler.

He graduated—nineteenth in his class—July 1st, 1859, and was at once attached, as brevet second lieutenant, to the First Dragoons, the famous regiment which, two years later, furnished so many leaders of highest rank and deathless fame to both armies in the civil war.

Joseph Wheeler's brief record in the United States army—at *that time*—reads thus: brevet second lieutenant First Dragoons, 1st July, 1859; transferred to Mounted Rifles, 21st June, 1860; second lieutenant 1st September, 1860; resigned, April 22, 1861.

Then the echoes of that first gun from Sumter had shaken the army to its center; men of all its grades were restless, uncertain and hesitant. It was not yet sure that there was to be real war, and some officers had not fully decided as to where they would fight, did that come. Not one of these was Joseph Wheeler, for to his nature decision means action. With a great wrench he tore himself from his loved career, resigned his cherished commission, turned his face southward, and tendered his

JOSEPH WHEELER.

yet untried sword to the nascent government at Montgomery.

The reader will recall that he was then a junior second lieutenant. Four years later—when only twenty-eight—he sheathed the stainless sword of a lieutenant-general!

The writer recalls vividly, across the long vista of busy years, his first meeting with the popular idol of to-day; the man of whom the long time uncompromising New York *Tribune* lately said:

“No place where the flag flies is too good for ‘Joe Wheeler’; and where he goes, his old comrades in arms must likewise go!”

He was a fresh young “Guinea pig” lieutenant, but a year from the Academy; and was then, in the summer of 1860, visiting Washington to try and transfer to the Rifles. The unwritten facts of this transfer from the Second Dragoons tell more of the man and his methods than a volume of praiseful type could do.

The Wheeler then met at the capital was a mild, reticent youth; nowise self-assertive, though quietly self-contained in port and speech; and with that reserve fund of indomitable will that has since carried him to victory over all obstacles. An early playmate—Gibbes, above mentioned—and a West Point chum of Wheeler’s, was the writer’s guest in Washington. He introduced us and told



JOSEPH WHEELER.
AS A LIEUTENANT, AT WEST POINT, 1858.

JOSEPH WHEELER.

of the young dragoon's longings. Later he added that the chances for their fulfilment were slim, as Wheeler could bring no direct influence to bear upon the War Department. But while others were discussing the doubts, the subject of them marched up to the Adjutant General's office, bluntly stated his case to Colonel Sam Cooper; and came back, just as quietly as he went, with the transfer order in his pocket. That is Wheeler's way, whether acting for himself, or for a friend.

Excepting a few gashes from Time's saber, and that now famous gray beard, the cadet of that day was very much the same man as the hero of this one. Small, agile and wiry, he was a natural drill-master and a born horseman. He was a noted "gallery favorite" with riding-school visitors; and for better reasons an equal one with his classmates. To them, through all lapse of time and glamor of fame, he is "Point Wheeler" still. Very recently, a letter from one of them, not meant for type, says:

"I recall Point Wheeler very clearly, as he was in those days. He was always earnest and quiet, and rarely spoke when he had nothing to say. He was a voracious reader of everything about war, which he could lay hands on. He was small in every measurement, but he was a natural-born soldier and a true gentleman always."

EARLIER DAYS.

It is needless to revert to his brilliant and familiar record, during the civil war. Everybody has, at last, read how he carved his own way from a company to a corps commander. The return of peace located him in New Orleans. There he changed his sword into a book-keeper's pen, his "pigskin" for a ledger; and became a commission merchant, in 1866. Doubtless the life was uncongenial to his active and aggressive temperament, expanded by the hot friction of war; but in days close *post bellum*, preference constantly gave the *pas* to necessity. So the young merchant wrought on in his new field; finding time to perfect himself in legal studies, for which he had strong natural bent and character fitness. But there was a more cogent—if more tender—inspiration to effort. The young warrior had surrendered without terms—as will be told presently; and the future—rosy as it seemed, and scented all with orange blossoms—must be looked to.

Meanwhile, he was tendered the position of commandant and professor of sciences, in the then University of Louisiana; but the compliment, while tempting, was declined. The young and ambitious fighter was ready for war on circumstance. He plainly had his eyes fixed on a future higher than the pedagogue's could ever become. Towards this he made his first move in 1868; gave up his New

JOSEPH WHEELER.

Orleans business and moved to Wheeler, an Alabama town named for him, and began the practice of law. There he prospered rapidly, and made friends of "all sorts and conditions of men."

III.—WHEELER IN WAR.

It is no part of the scheme of this brief book to describe battles and sieges; to follow its subject in his brilliant charges and daring raids; or to discuss his acumen and strategic force, as compared with those of contemporary leaders. All these matters have already been discussed by historians, and compared by pens far abler than this, guided by hands of men familiar with each scene described.

And yet, mooted points of judgment—of minor details, even—remain unsettled still. History, sketch and discussion of them will continue to be written, haply "to the crack of doom." And still unsettled *differentiæ* may also remain of moot, even to that far off and unfixed period. But there are some points of the wars in which he took such active part—some scenes of the bloody-brilliant and swift-changing drama, in which his *role* was so leading—as to make them wholly personal to the man, and to

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throw broader and clearer light upon any consideration of his character.

Notable among these was his "Ride around Rosecrans"—detailed later; and it has always struck the writer as equally curious as unjust that it has been so little celebrated in story, song and picture. For boldness and dash, combined with incisive strategy and tremendous result, it would be hard to find one in the whole civil war that even approached it. And that raid alone would have proved Wheeler a great soldier, had his keen and ever-ready sabre been sheathed forever after it.

Stuart's "Pamunkey Raid"—round the rear of McClellan's army as it lay before Richmond, to the White House on that river—has been the theme of at least one great painting, scores of essays, romances and songs, and of one poem that will live so long as Confederate memory exists. Indeed, John R. Thompson's "Burial of Latane" will be read by many who have forgotten that war's causes, no less than it details; even as we read to-day the swirl of Sydney's charge and the legendary verse of Sir Launcelot and "Roderick, the Gay." Yet that poem and William D. Washington's fine painting, alike commemorate the one casualty that saddened the brilliant and daring foray of the Virginian cavalier.

With no intent to touch one single leaf of the evergreen laurels that crown Jeb Stuart's fame, no

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student of the time can compare *his* great raid with the desperate, destructive and resultful one of Wheeler's handful around the wily old fighter in the blue; and that in the face of fearful odds and with every chance against him. For movements of its knights upon war's great chess-board must ever be measured by their effect upon the closing of the great game; and it is almost simple to prove that this bold maneuver saved checkmate to Bragg—when its own check had been fatal.

Stuart's move was a brilliant, well conceived and useful one; but it was more a reconnoissance-in-force, for information; and it neither crippled the enemy, nor affected his commander's "gambit," in measurable proportion to Wheeler's. Yet, the two showed a certain similarity in the fighting qualities of the two great cavalry chiefs. Both possessed audacity, coolness and dauntless determination to achieve the result aimed at; both had that gift—so rare as to be purely God-given—of making men follow to the death, with but the one thought of going after their leader. Both met odds with high disdain, that was almost ever sure presage of victory; and both had the absolute confidence of their commanders—who told them where, but never *how*, to go.

'But there the character-parallel diverges; for Stuart was "ever gay," laughing amid peril and

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soothing reverse when it came rarely, by the seductive tinkle of his banjo-player's art. Wheeler was ever cognizant of the gravity of the result he *must* achieve; weighing the chances as calmly—making his resolve, or changing his plan as quickly, at need, under the crushing charge of overwhelming numbers, as he did in the quiet of his tent, or the hot discussion of the council. This trait has kept young with him, through all these years: it was as fresh at Santiago, as when he wheeled his horse and led his “corporal's guard” to hold his pursuers, and save Forrest, at Duck river—when only his wonderful leap into its bullet-churned current saved himself.

In this side of his character, the little general more resembles Stonewall Jackson; if less introspective and reticent than the grand Puritan of the war. Less saturnine and meditative than Jackson, he also resembled him in unsparing use of his men, when need called for pushing them beyond endurance, with seeming cruelty of spur. If Jackson's “foot cavalry” fell by the way in those meteor-like marches in the Valley, he let them lie and rushed to victory with the rest. When Wheeler's worn men and starving horses were reported to him unfit to go further, he left the very worst of them and somehow *got there* with the rest. These points of similarity will be shown later by example; and,

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for another, Wheeler was ever a true Christian, a prayerful man—trusting in God and nightly communing with Him, under the stars of the camp, or roof of a friend—in imminent peril and through victory's flush alike. Nor was even Jackson more loved by the men he used—when needs he must—like automatons, or mere driven cattle.

All know the story upon which James R. Randall based his great and tender poem, "The Lone Sentry." It was reported to Jackson that the men—pushed past human endurance—had fallen in their tracks as they reached camp, and were absolutely unfit for guard duty. Reliant and tender, if iron under pressure, the great soul of the Napoleon of the Valley spoke. "I will guard the camp!" he said; and while he watched, his giants "slept and were refreshed."

A similar incident of self-abnegation—and that in the face of absolute certainty of a great and echo-making victory—is known of Wheeler. Who wrote the version of it given here, the writer of the final sketches of this volume does not know; but it is copied from the worn scrap-book of an old Southern lady; and it is "Wheeler all over" to those who know him. It was when Hood sent his cavalry to harry Sherman's flanks and deter his march by every possible destruction and obstacle he could: "On this raid, when at Sparta, Tenn., his com-

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mand was anxious to move on to Nashville. The important question with all was: 'Will General Wheeler take Nashville?' None asked: *Can* he take it? His force being several times that of the enemy, success was sure. One of his generals called to see him and inquired if he intended taking Nashville.

" 'Why, general?' was the calm reply.

" 'To be candid with you, general,' replied the officer, 'the press of the South has so vituperated you that everybody has lost confidence in you except your own command and those of the army who have had an opportunity of knowing what you have done. Your own reputation and that of your command demand that you should take Nashville; you know you can easily do it.'

" 'Yes,' replied General Wheeler, 'I am confident of success if I undertake it, but what good to our cause would be accomplished? None. General Hood sent me here to do what harm I could to General Sherman; this would not injure him; no harm can be done him except by destroying railroads; we have no time to waste on outside matters.'

" 'Yes, general, but your reputation demands this of you. You have been a commanding officer for nearly four years, and have never yet struck a blow for *yourself*; always doing what you thought for the good of the country. Everybody else works for themselves some, and why not you? If you would



LIEUTENANT-GENERAL, WHEELER.

Expressly reproduced and enlarged from a war-time "carte-de-visite,"
taken in 1864.

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take Nashville you would be pronounced the greatest cavalry leader of the war—if you do not, with all the press of the country against you—I do not know how you can sustain yourself. You can take Nashville and not lose more than one hundred men. You ought to do it.’

“In his calm, quiet and dignified, yet modest, manner, General Wheeler replied: ‘General, my troops were not given me to make a name, but to do what I could for my country. I care not for the loss of my position. While I am ready this minute to sacrifice myself and all of my command to accomplish a corresponding good for my country, there is not a man in my command I would have wounded to make me the greatest general in the world.’

“’Twas the knowledge of the proper valuation of human life by General Wheeler, who, they well knew, would only send them where he led and where duty called, that made his men such devoted followers; and all men are compelled to admire such noble traits of character.”

This simply-told story of the old lady’s scrap-book needs no moral pointed. It smacks much of Stonewall Jackson, something of Havelock, and no little of Sir Galahad—“because his heart is pure!”

President Davis was not a courtier. Unlike Tallejrand he never spoke for the sake of hearing himself think; far less would he have sent down to

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posterity, a dictum unmeant, or hastily considered. At no period of his career was the Confederate Chief ever addicted to compliments, merely for compliment's sake; yet he pays General Wheeler a tribute that will last as graven stone. Summing up his value and results, in his "Rise and Fall of the Confederacy," Mr. Davis said:

"With his small force Wheeler daringly and persistently harrassed and, when practicable, delayed the enemy's advance, attacking and defeating exposed detachments, deterring its foragers from venturing far from the main body and defending all cities and towns along the railroad lines. His operations display a dash, activity, vigilance and consummate skill which justly entitle him to a permanent place on the roll of great cavalry leaders."

Such, in necessarily brief and crude form, is a glimpse of the man in his native element—war. It needs no detail to prove him the born-leader—vigorous, alert, magnetic and tactful. It shows him equally the humanitarian, even in the most inhuman—if most necessary—of the world's sciences.

What he did at Santiago—why he was moved to do it, at an age when men still in uniform seek retirement and rest—is all too fresh in the popular mind to need iteration just here. Some of it—necessary perhaps to correct understanding of his character and its outcome in action—will be noted later, in

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the closing chapters. Suffice it here to note that the world accepts General Wheeler not only as the great fighter, but as the great *soldier*.

Echoes from distant lands repeat the proud acclaim that was his, when he stepped once more upon that native soil, for which he had twice battled so grandly—meek, undemonstrative, but laurel-crowned—after the Cuban campaign.

While the President placed in his hands a great and grave trust—and he sat down at Montauk to perform it, as simply and naturally as though an every-day citizen—men and women alike burst into the swelling chorus of his praises. One and all realized the truth that

“ The bravest are the tenderest,
The loving are the daring.”

Even the prosaic writer of this epitome of the “ War Child’s ” record wrote—because he could not help it:

WHEELER.

DEDICATED TO THE MUSE OF HISTORY.

Pause, thou fair Muse, who wieldest fateful pen

That writes to Time, for sorrow, or for ruth,

The tale alike of great and little men—

Pause at his name, whose highest meed is truth !

There Fame’s best guerdon tells in simplest speech

Philosophy may by example teach.

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'Mid all the throng that may thy scroll illumine—
Crowded with patient brave whom duty led—
Wheeler's grand record lightens through the gloom,
Foremost wher'er the bravest fought and bled ;
And not the sabre stainless that he waved
Was keener than what thought the council saved !

A warrior reared from young, impulsive days,
By fostering hand—if mailed—of the State,
That stainless blade for her was quick to raise,
And carve a record clean as it was great.
His the rare gift to bow to Fate's decree
And higher rise from deep adversity.

For—sheathed that blade—the spirit keen within
Flashed forth in bloodless battles for the right ;
As statesman true, respected, quick he'd win
All hearts of men in Honor's endless fight,
Where rent repute and battered name strew far
Fields not less fatal of the wordy war.

But when the time for talk to him seemed o'er,
To answer foreign taunt and boasting vain,
The good old hilt leapt to his grasp once more
To strike for country and—avenge the Maine !
Then the late "Rebel" proved his patriot truth—
His country's calling quick renewed his youth.

When the fierce fever, that struck down strong men
The bullets spared, pressed hot on brow and lid,
Soul more than body sprang to horse again
And led to triumph—as once led The Cid !
And, when some wavered in the council grim,
Rose the old voice—and Victory answered him !

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Muse of the deathless pen, thy record trace
Today for Time, of one grand knight and true ;
Nor strive this shining lesson to erase :
He links the old-time virtues to the new.
Hail his return unscathed, whose fame must stand
Example for one people with one land !

IV.—AS THE PUBLICIST.

Patriotism and nationalism are the foundations of Joseph Wheeler's greatness, even as loyal truth is its keystone.

It has been shown how the boy went to West Point from resistless desire to serve his country ; how the youth made that great wrench, which tore him away—as he believed forever—from his ideal career, only because he believed in duty to the soil that gave him birth. All men—of all parties—have learned to know that when Joseph Wheeler went into politics he was impelled by the character necessity within him to work and fight and suffer for his native land, armed with such weapons as he could best grasp for her defence from foes without her boundaries—or within.

But, once enlisted—under the dome of the national arsenal—in the army of peace, he was as

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true to instinct of right and honor, as he had been when battling for life and death with some colleagues, then his foes.

When he surrendered his stainless blade and gave his parole, the war was over for Joseph Wheeler. He could not accept the condition of things that parodied justice and disgraced civilization in his adopted state during the era of so-called "Reconstruction." Fighter born, and honest by instinct, he could but fight fraud, imposed satrapy and machine-made laws. But he fought them in the open; not as some counseled, with the tactics of the bushwhacker.

From the day he became an Alabamian, his brave, outspoken counsel won him admirers. His indomitable courage of conviction, and his indubitable honesty of purpose and of speech, won him friends. And as these wrought with him and learned to know him better, they linked those friends to him with hooks of steel.

Wheeler's meteoric career in war is not more brilliant—and perhaps less remarkable—than his record as a publicist. In congress he is the same earnest, farseeing, indefatigable fighter; always alert, and almost always successful.

In the long and bitter struggle of Alabama—preceeding the victory of 1874, which shook off alien carpet-bag domination and seated Houston in the

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governor's chair—these traits shone as conspicuously and brilliantly in the young political leader, as had the bright sword that ever blazed in the front of battle—beckoning, not pointing to victory! And when—following the fitness of things—his friends and neighbors saw them to be the needed traits in the brilliant battle of peace, they sent him to congress a few years later, to repeat on the wider field the successes of the smaller; to fight their national fight as he had that of his state.

The old eighth district of Alabama is “nobody’s fool.” In its own practical way: “When it sees a good thing, it goes for it.” That good thing it saw in his representation of it; and he has been sent back—term after term, and over every ambitious desire and every political trickery used to displace him. Further on some details of his work will be pointed; but it is the result of his methods of work which are meant to be noted just here.

His just bravery and his modest insistence for the right early won him the love of his party friends and the respect of his political opponents. The manly courtesy and quick magnetism of his character; his earnestness, that carries conviction with it; and his absolute lack of partisan, or sectional rancor—in days when fresh wounds were sore, and when heated blood had scarce found time to cool, under re-kindled provocation—soon changed that

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respect into personal liking; often into warm and genuine friendship. For that other old soldier, in the play, was a better philosopher than swordsman when he said:

“Gad! one never knows how much he likes a fellow until he has fought him!”

The men who fought Joseph Wheeler on the national battle-fields found him a wary, keen and skillful fighter—but never a wily one. He never struck until the opponent put up his hands, and he never took down his own while there was a “fighting chance” left for his taking. Rapidly he became a marked man on the floor; from the first he has been an invaluable one in the committee room. Until the spreading growth of his fame outran his inclination, he kept studiously out of the newspapers; believing that the work he had been sent to accomplish could be best done by conference and mutual concessions, and that the advertising politician was equally liable to hurt himself as he was sure not to help his constituents.

But the men about him who knew the Alabamian best—in congress, in the departments and in social life—became impressed with the fact that a “southern brigadier in congress” might not only be an aggressive and sturdy fighter for his section and her people, but a national man and a broad-gauge patriot at one and the same time. The eyes of



MAJOR-GENERAL JOSEPH WHEELER IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

First row, in front of and to the right of the Speaker.

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thinking leaders became fixed on the seemingly quiet little representative; and they often rolled uneasily in their sockets when they saw him set himself steadily to carry some unpopular measure through the house. Instances of how he did this more than once will be recorded elsewhere.

But steadily Joseph Wheeler received advancement—through no seeking of his own—in public estimate; so that when he offered his sword, first of all, to the president in the then impending war, the country knew the man and applauded his acceptance for the highest grade in army service.

Mr. McKinley knew him, too. He had fought him in war and served with him on the floor of the house. He realized, perhaps more than any of his chosen friends and colleagues, that there was more stuff in the ex-Confederate than the every-day major general need be made of. Plainly the president had ample confidence in his appointee; and that it was amply justified the hands and voices of the entire country reaffirm today.

Wheeler's selection for the trying and thankless command at Montauk was not meant for a compliment; nor yet was it a matter of rank. There were older and regular generals at leisure; and some of them "pulling for it." But the need was not only for a soldier, but also for one who was something more than a soldier. And this the president saw,

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when he voluntarily gave into General Wheeler's hands a discretion so absolute as to make him practically commander-in-chief in his own department, free from intervention of the war department.

It is plain that the president—both in his first appointment and later assignment—had looked beneath the uniform and justly estimated the man. He saw that intellectual activity and physical vigor had, in General Wheeler's case, made exceptional resistance to time's attack; that when the veteran left the seat that was his indefinitely, he had done so not from impulse but because of patriotism and love for the whole country, then threatened. He saw that the Spanish war was as inevitable as the civil war had been; that while most of his colleagues were "crying 'peace! peace!'—there could be no peace." He offered the tried old sword; the president accepted it and—when judgment keener and as true as that sword was needed—he placed its wielder in the most trying post the war had shown. This is the sort of praise that speaks the loudest: it is the sort that will echo longest.

But the impulsiveness and instinct of the old fighter moved through his veins in even course with the chivalrous gentleness of true knighthood. They first carried him to the fore-front of fire and

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carnage at San Juan. They raised his voice loud and victorious, in the wavering council, against any retrograde from gained advantage, that would cost equal blood and risk to rewin. But the last halted the ambulance of the fevered commander, at the presence of suffering: and, when he took to the saddle again forced the wounded privates into his place.

But there has been vaunt of none of this by the man himself, or by those nearest to him. The soldier, who left ease and honors for that front he knew so well from experience, left them for *duty* only. That he has performed—as the true man ever does—with no fanfare of trumpets; and avoiding slightest friction with superior, inferior, or humbled enemy. Amid all the rush of ambitions and all clash of interests, this real soldier has stood as calm and unperturbed, as in the clash of sabres and the sing of shells.

This is high praise? Unlike most praise, it is simple truth, unvarnished and unadorned. The polish and the gilding for these bare facts will come in history.

It is seen that Joseph Wheeler is, in no sense the typical politician.

Clique and cabal have never known him; but, while a solid party man, he has shown his first and unswerving loyalty to his constituency, to the

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advancement of the people of his entire section; and, most pronouncedly, to his country.

His loyalty to her needs no underscoring. He has always shown belief that he was sent to congress to do the best that was in him; and he has ever done that, without asking instructions. The result is his rock-based popularity; his hold equally upon the confidence and the affection of all the people of "the old eighth." This stands proved by his automatic canvass, against the strongest opponents ever set up against him.

Absorbed in military duties in Cuba, he made no appeals; writing but one letter, to say he would go back to Congress, if elected—and if the war were over. That settled it. Opposition, seeing no head to make, withdrew; and the exceptional spectacle was shown the country of a *whole* congressional district voting unanimously for one man, without regard to party, race, politics, or prejudice. It was the triumph of personality over politics—and the most sweeping one ever seen.

Impulsive to the verge of rashness; quick to form opinions and immovable in them; asking nothing as mere favor, but demanding every right to the full, he is still the popular idol of his home people, and the respected exemplar of southern representation to his colleagues. Not aspiring to "brilliance," and never posing for mere effect, he is content to

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be the practical "working member;" and he has accomplished as much for his district, his state and his section, as the most silver-tongued orator, or the most ingrain "Chicane," that ever sat on congressional leather.

During the war of the '60's, some flings were made at Wheeler's generalship; that he was not a strategist, was a poor disciplinarian, and similar "broad assertions." The busy little general, if he heard them, was too occupied with his weightier objectors—in blue—to answer. But his country answered for him. He was from first to last the commander of all the cavalry of the Western Army. Mr. Davis, or the war department changed its chief command—Beauregard, Johnston, Bragg, Hood—but the chief command of the cavalry remained always Wheeler, with no demurs from commander, or from Richmond.

In this later war—or rather since its close—slurs have been cast at the general's blunt and just statement of his belief before the Army Investigating Committee; and a few spiteful remarks were made by little men, at his close relations with the president, during the late southern tour. These were answered by the people of the whole country, in the wild acclaims that greeted his appearance everywhere. They drowned infant detraction in a flood of enthusiasm that swept from Omaha and

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Chicago and Philadelphia—through the halls of Alabama's legislature and the streets of his native Augusta. This is a mere historic mention, not a defence of General Wheeler. He needs no defence to any man who would recognize Truth, did he meet her at noon in a narrow lane. History must repeat herself, perhaps; and sometimes the repetition inspires one with the belief that the Harpies of old were less creations of poetic fantasy than evolutions from human nature.

The national estimate of this truly national publicist is pointed by an anecdote told the writer last summer; and, as it chanced, by "the only soldier Mrs. Grover Cleveland ever kissed." This sergeant, coming from Tampa on a train with a squad of sick Massachusetts boys, mentioned that the general had opposition for congress in his district. There was a general chorus of irate surprise among the Bay statesmen; and one lank, raw-boned fellow raised a nasal voice to remark:

"Well, by Gosh! ef they beat him thar, send him to Massachusetts and *we'll* send him to Congress!"

There spoke nationalism for nationalism; patriotism for patriotism.

Born in the South, educated in the North, entering the army from New York, wielding the sword of a "rebel," or of a "patriot" hero; representing a

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southern constituency, without friction from sectional jealousy, for the longest existent term; in the trenches, and equally in the wavering council of the generals—he stands forth the same Joe Wheeler; fearless for the right, respecting the rights of others—and clear-headed withal.

If he be not type of that true nationalism, which makes America progressive and victorious, then has it no type—North, South, East or West!

Loyal to his flag, his section, his friends—and to himself—he concretes what the writer tried to express in his first lines after the days of Santiago:

The Nation's soldier, standing in the van,
A lifelong lesson writes for youth to read:
Truth to the State makes true American!

V.—THE WHEELER FAMILY.

When those of a family, known to a nation, are so respected and beloved by it, delicacy does not forbid somewhat of intrusion into its home circle. From hearing so much about some of its members, all the country is anxious to know more of all the Wheelers.

There is sound foundation in human nature for the French axiom : *Bon sang ne peut mentir* ; and, as has been noted, the most popular American of today has in his veins “good blood”—still hot, red and throbbing—which has never lied, and cannot. He comes, as was premised, from good old fighting stock, of English strain ; and it was the most wily judge of men—himself more soldier and statesman than priest—whom Bulwer made declare :

No mongrels, boy, those island mastiffs !

Joseph Wheeler’s father, for whom he was named, was a wealthy and respected citizen of Georgia ; a banker and planter near Augusta, and deeply interested in the growth and progress of that town—which gave his son so royal a reception, on the recent southern tour of the president. His mother was Julia Knox Hull, daughter of the famous



THE WHEELER FAMILY. (Last picture taken.)

Julia Knox Hull Wheeler.

Thomas Harrison Wheeler.

Annie Early Wheeler.

Carrie Peyton Wheeler.

Mrs. Ella Jones Wheeler.

Joseph Wheeler, Jr.

Lucy Louise Wheeler.

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General William Hull, who had the friendship and confidence of Washington in the revolution and succeeding border wars. To this side, too, he traces English descent, through the early Puritan strain.

The now world-known son of this noted pair was born at the Augusta plantation, on Sept. 10, 1836; and thus lacked six months of his twenty-fifth year when he resigned his life-dream of a career in the U. S. army and offered his sword to his native state.

When the boy was but five years old, his mother died; and it was found that the once-great fortune had melted away in unsuccessful ventures, and in great part from that trait of helping his friends, which has proved so marked a motor of the son's life-action. Then young Joseph left the South for the new skies of "way Down East," and the new care of maternal relatives. He went to school in Cheshire, Conn., for a while; but later went to New York, where he began to work for his own living at the age of fourteen, when most southern boys of gentle birth were preparing for the high school. Perhaps this change of residence hastened his sturdy growth in character, beyond its natural development in warmer climate and under softer influences of a luxurious southern home.

He largely educated himself, and gained friends by his quiet dignity and manliness. Among them

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was a congressman from New York who, by strange coincidence, bore his own family name, though nowise related to him. This Mr. Wheeler appointed him to West Point, as a cadet from New York; and he entered the army in his twenty-third year, as elsewhere detailed.

Never what is known as a "ladies' man," young Wheeler always held women in that high respect which is shared by all finer-natured men; and, to this day, he regards the request of a lady with the same punctilio that he does the command of his ranking officer. But it is not of record that he was ever the hero of affairs of the heart—beyond those scarless ones inevitable to adolescence; nor did the absorbing rush of the war let him turn to lighter and prettier "engagements," as they did so many another gallant fellow. The mother of his idolized children was the one love of his long life.

Diametrically opposite—in mental and physical mould; in theory, practice and tastes, as were the two men, this recalls gallant and gone Pierce Young. That other Georgia cavalryman-by-instinct was the only major general, in either army, younger than Wheeler, as he received that commission on his twenty-fourth birthday.* On the

*When I made the hero of my novel, "The Puritan's Daughter," do this, and the critics declared it absurd, Young came to my rescue with the above statement of his own case.—THE AUTHOR.

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last occasion when Young and the writer dined together—poor fellow! that was a merry party under the magnolias of Mobile's bay shore—some one chaffed him about a noted war-belle, who had captured one of his most gallant brigade commanders.

"Don't think I knew her," the *beau sabreur* muttered, through a medium of crab *pate*. "While you fellows were flirting in the rear, I was fighting in the front!"

And so, while equally brave, but less earnest and devoted, soldiers were receiving smiles from the sex as reward for privation and danger, the young general of the cavalry "was fighting at the front." His only coquetting was with some blue-clad cavalry chief—often an old Academy chum of his own—only to "throw him over" on the earliest opportunity. But of love, Macaulay might have made Horatius say, as truly as of the other inevitable:

To every man upon this earth
Death cometh, soon or late!

So, the warrior, invulnerable to sharpshooter's lead, was hard hit at last by the little blind archer; but it was not until 1863—when in his twenty-seventh year—that he "met his fate."

Miss Daniella Jones was the lovely and widely beloved daughter of Colonel Richard Jones, a noted

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Alabamian of that day, and Lucy W. Early; the family home being near Muscle Shoals on the Tennessee River. When scarcely sixteen, Miss Jones had married Mr. Benjamin Sherrod; but she had returned to her father's hospitable roof in her widowhood, before she was yet out of her teens.

Loyal to the South, indeed, and hospitable to her boys in gray, was that Alabama homestead, even amid the hardest privations of frequent raid and skirmish, back and forth. Its doors ever swung wide, and its larder was ever freely offered—even to the stinting of its more fortunate possessors—when footsore, or hungry, “Johnny cum marchin’ home.” And in the absence of her father, his gentle and noble-hearted daughter was quick to dispense that sacred and—often too needful—hospitality. Hers was a loyal and constant character; and shines undimmed in those children, who today revere her memory scarcely more than they illustrate her tender, practical and loving nurture of all that she saw best in their youth.

When Wheeler's cavalry crossed the Tennessee, near Muscle Shoals, on its return from his dashing and successful “Ride round Rosecrans,” it was near midnight; and, ere his worn and hungry boys reached the longed-for and familiar Jones mansion, the family had all retired. But those were not days for ceremony, when “our boys” called; so

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the daughter of the house quickly rose and drew latch for the gray jackets.

It is related—by the same friend of the general who wrote the sketches that end this book—that he did not meet the lady until the succeeding day. She had inquired about him of the men, and expressed a desire to see him, when one of them laughed and said :

“ Well, madam, you won’t see a great deal of him when you do.”

That cavalryman was more joker than prophet. His general was presented ; and it was said to have been a case of “ love at first sight ;” though unlike most of such it lasted through a life time—even after the object of it was lost to the vision of *one* of the twain.

The lady was first interested by the self-forgetfulness and sadness of the victorious leader, on receiving reports from his subordinates of killed and casualties. This was the beginning of an acquaintance that soon ripened into a mutual attachment, resulting in an engagement that brought the couple to the altar, early after the peace—on February 8th, 1866.

It was the beginning, too, of three decades of an ideal union ; in which devotion, congeniality and common aims made them not alone one—but made the entire family seem as one. For the

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Wheclers are a united clan, each devoted to the other and to their home; ever forgetting self—as has been so strongly proved of late—in tender thoughtfulness for the rest of the loved ones. Joseph Wheeler—the great Confederate veteran, the true and influential politician—*facile princeps* of the later war, is the hero and idol of a whole people; but he is not to them the idol that he is at home—pedestaled on the infinite love of those gentle daughters, to whose care their mother entrusted him, when she passed on before, to await them all.

The Wheeler family that made their old Alabama home, at Wheeler, an ideal “capital of Love’s pure realm,” comprised this father and mother and seven children—five daughters and two sons. Two years ago, the All-Wise dispensation called the mother from the tender care of the children she had brought up in His sight. One of her daughters had preceded her to the beyond; and the people of a whole country have just sent out their hearts in genuine sympathy to those left desolate by the sudden taking away of their youngest, brightest and best.

Joseph Wheeler, jr,—the third of that name—is the first born. He graduated from the Academy in 1895; and is now a second lieutenant in the Fourth Artillery, U. S. A., and served through the Cuban

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campaign on his father's staff, as aide-de-camp. That he served faithfully goes without saying. He proved worthy son of that father in field and camp; and is another young Alabamian who hinted what the old Gulf State might have recorded on history of today, had her young war-dogs been loosened for the fray.

Miss Lucy Louise is the eldest daughter; and next to her comes Miss Annie Early, bearer of her maternal grandmother's family name. Ella, the next daughter, died in early youth; and Miss Julia Knox Hull revives the name of her father's mother. Thomas Harrison Wheeler is the last record in the family Bible; and the one just above it is Carrie Peyton Wheeler.

Inscrutable indeed, to finite ken, are His ways Who gives us life, and takes it for His ends—sometimes in form so seeming harsh that mortal weakness *must* rebel.

The Wheeler family were reunited once more; happy in their united work for good at Montauk, and seemingly safe from battle and from sudden death. Four of them—the general, his two boys and his gently heroic daughter—had been in Cuba. All had returned unharmed by wound, or climate. Then—while all four were busied with their work of love and duty; while the entire family were serving the sick, and letting their whole hearts go

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out into their work of love for strangers—came His touch, to lay a desolation and a woe unspeakable upon them all. It came with no warning—with no *seeming* reason—upon the one whose youth and health, and necessity to his own, made it least of all probable—least of all, bearable.

“The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.” But there was a pall over that grief-frozen group at Montauk, so heavy and so black that no mortal eye might see through it one single ray of light — *then !*

The gentle, gallant young naval cadet had just returned from service in Cuban waters, and had been assigned to temporary duty with his father. He was the idol of that father; the joy and hope and pride of those sisters, whose loving hands and pure precepts had brought their “Bonny Boy” to the threshold of manhood, from that childhood left them as a holy trust by their mother’s latest breath.

“He had been so tenderly loved and protected, and shielded from every harsh wind, all of his flower-like life ! The boy, in whose spotless character was found the fruition of all their fondest hopes and ambitions and aspirations; who had *never* been anything but an unalloyed pleasure and pride, all of his days ! That *he* should meet and conquer the darkness and shadow of Death—all alone, in the cold, dark water in a storm, without



THOMAS HARRISON WHEELER;
NAVAL CADET, ATTACHED TO HIS FATHER'S STAFF.

Drowned off Montauk Point, N. Y., Sept. 7, 1898.

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one tender word or loving touch from the hearts near by, that would so gladly have died for his sake !

“When he came back, we knew, from the kingly majesty of his face—on which a conquering glory seemed to shine—that he had, in no way, faltered or failed in what seemed his simple duty. His companion was in distress, and he would not leave him.”

These words, written by one who knows best how the dead boy was loved and is mourned, are quoted here as wholly adequate. Nothing the author might write could add to them. They tell the whole story of the beautiful and blameless life; of the sacramental death.

Tom Wheeler went into the storm-swollen sea to bathe. His companion needed help and the true boy went to his aid. He went to seeming death: and entered into eternal Life.

This author has never made remote pretense to being a poet. Like all students of a Jesuit college, he learned verse-measuring—partly in the *curriculum* course; partly, it must be confessed, for “punishments.” Sometimes, when stirred by unusual emotions, he has found their expression better in numbers than in prose. One of these occasions was, when—after a whole people had held its breath for many hours, suspenseful but still hoping—the awful

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certainly came that the darling of the Wheeler family had been snatched from their corporeal clasp. While the dull truth still thudded on his ear, came the lines that found their best meed in acceptance by the stricken father and daughters :

SOLACE.

Covered with honors—crowned with fadeless bays—
A hero sits and gazes o'er the sea ;
His numbed sense deafened to a nation's praise,
Resounding ceaselessly.

For three wan women, crushed by sudden loss,
Group at his knee, and vainly strive to bear,
For his dear sake, the overweighing cross—
The last born is not there !

Snatched from warm hearts, that gloried in his youth
And promise, by cold clasping of the tide
That gave back clay for what was life and truth
And budding manly pride,

O'er fair young Valor, couched in endless sleep
On Death's cold breast, unwak'ning teardrops fall,
For Love and Grief their endless vigil keep—
His Country spreads the pall.

What now to them doth glory signify ?
What solace that a nation's freighted heart
Throbs sympathy, where late its pulsings high
Bade only triumph start ?

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Not yet—while dulled and staggered by the blow
So seeming harsh—bewildered—sore distressed—
May come the full sense of the truth they know :
That His ways are the best.

Yet even now speaks low the one refrain :
Stunned by the loss of brother and of son,
They hear, soft echoing from the Cross again :
“ Father, Thy will be done ! ”

VI.—THE ARMY ANGEL.

He who scoffs at heredity is a shallow student of physiology, and a thoughtless onlooker at the mysteries of Nature. He cannot escape the belief that the pugilist may rear the poet; that the plowhorse is the peer of the thoroughbred.

When this inadequate review of a long and most useful life was inscribed to the lady whose name honors its pages, it was not because she is heroic daughter of a hero, nor yet because her name is on every lip in loving cadence of praise. It was because of her great and selfless work of love, undertaken for the humble and the suffering, and carried to an end that crowned her with unfading bays—sprung from the brave hearts that knew her best;

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who throned her high in their admiring love, and in her queenship of it knew her as the "Army Angel."

Simple tribute, but grand, was this to any work of woman; but priceless beyond words, when fairly won by merit, and worn with all humanity.

For that Wheeler trait shines with clear, white gleam about the whole life of this exceptional girl. Yet she is only a *true* woman. There is not one point in her character—as it shows in the searchlight of an unsought and repugnant publicity, from which she would shrink back into herself—which could remotely suggest "the new woman."

Miss Wheeler is, by descent, a Daughter of the Revolution, as she is a Daughter of the Confederacy; and her work has forced her into a necessary prominence in both. Yet she belongs to both *jure divino*; with no suggestion of self-illustration—no suspicion that she is more noteworthy than any one of her sisters in their work of love and patriotism.

Still, no one who reads the bare, cold facts of her later life can fail to recall Elizabeth Barrett's "A Court Lady"—different in degree and in surrounding as were the days in Santiago and in Italy.

No higher tribute than that title, "An Army Angel," was ever paid by valor to true womanhood. Those rough, but gallant, men who upheld the flag under which they had enlisted, through every trial of blistering sun, tropical rain, leaden hail—and most

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of all, through long siege of the dread, unseen foe, yellow fever—meant no empty compliment when their hearts moved their parched lips. They knew that this tender girl—the only non-immune nurse permitted to enter Santiago—was not a professional nurse, but a volunteer who had come to their rescue, impelled by resistless sense of duty.

But those brave fellows cared not that Miss Annie Early Wheeler was the daughter of their general—save that she was his character-daughter, and had come to *her* duty, even as he has sprung to his—because it seemed to her to be duty.

And the daughter has proved, through this demand upon her inborn greatness of soul—just as the father has proved so long, in war and peace—the axiomatic truth. The “good blood” that had come down from revolutionary days, in pure and undiluted stream, “could not lie,” in her veins, or in his.

Very much of bathos, and more of error, have been written about Miss Wheeler’s truly remarkable work. The Munchausens in little who have “filled space” for portions of the press have done her real injustice, where their weakness meant praise. To compare their statements—did they still live, and merit comparison—this simple-hearted, brave and earnest woman would seem a composite of Jeanne d’ Arc, Florence Nightingale, the “Good Lady Bertha” and “Alice in Wonderland.” But,

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happily, the truth of history lives, and all of journalism is not jaundiced.

In very truth, to all who know her—and to those fit to comprehend her, unknown—Miss Annie Wheeler is simply a high-natured southern girl, whose inborn truth, brave heart and more than ordinary common sense were aided by the God-given gifts of steady nerves and a strong constitution. She went forth on her mission, from a resistless sense of love and duty to her own; she saw the field broaden before her into a vista of love-work undreamed of, and she accepted the trust He placed in her hands, unfalteringly. Pure-hearted as fabled Galabad, she reached out her hand for Love, and grasped—the Grail!

Once amid the touching, but hideous, surroundings of a pestilent-fever camp, all her true woman's heart went out to the suffering brother—known, or stranger alike. She served one and all with a tenderness that made each word a prayer—each touch a benison. And she did this all with never one idea that she was a heroine—simply because she was a true woman who, through it all had no one thought of self.

Reticence is as marked a characteristic of Miss Wheeler, as are gentle courage and selflessness; and it is simple truth to say that—returning to be confronted with an echoing fame, that surprised her

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more than any other—she has never once *posed*. Indeed, she shrunk back from public gaze into new duties ; and, to this hour, she cannot be brought to belief that she has done aught, which “any other girl,” similarly placed, would not have done as gladly, and fully as well as she.

In this belief—and for good reason—the Nation does not share ; and every soldier of the Cuban army would denounce it as rank heresy—as treason to the queenship of real womanhood. Yet, Miss Wheeler only wonders at it all ; will speak nothing of her work—and especially nothing of her feelings—save to the few trusted friends to whom she simply expresses her surprise that “a plain duty” should be made so much of.

All the world, at home and abroad, knows—in a disconnected, nebulous fashion—that General Wheeler’s daughter was an army nurse ; that she braved dangers of many kinds, with a calm, trustful courage that a veteran soldier might have lacked ; that she is famous, and a popular idol, even to millions who have never even seen her picture. But the true story of her mission and of its outcome, has never before been given in succinct and consecutive form, for the simple reason that but one person living could possibly write it ; and that *she* has a shrinking horror at the idea of putting her motives and her feelings before public gaze.

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It will therefore be all the more interesting for that public, which knows Miss Wheeler so widely, yet so little, to read her own brief and simple recital of the story. It was written in a personal letter to a trusted friend, and with no possible thought that it would even be seen by other eyes. But that letter so convincingly asserts her to be true daughter of true sire—it so appeals to every man's heart—and to every woman's—by its touching simplicity and naturalness—that it belongs to history, even without its brief statement of facts that are wholly unknown.

Feeling this keenly, the author of this sketch gained reluctant assent to show an extract of Miss Wheeler's letter to the world, just as she wrote it to her friend, and with no word changed. Writing under recent date, she says :

“I cannot say that I have ever had an aptitude for nursing, although I have always been *so* sorry for those who were in sorrow, need, sickness or any other affliction. But in my mother's lifetime, she gave us such tender, sheltering care that we were never allowed to go into the presence of any illness of any kind. She was always afraid of contagion, for us; and she also thought it was a pity for young people to come in contact with sadness or trouble, so long as it could be avoided.



MISS ANNIE EARLY WHEELER.

In the uniform in which she won the love and
admiration of the world.

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“She always tried to fill our lives with sunshine and to keep away the shadows. With her tender love and faith in her children, she always said that she thought that, being raised in this way, if any emergency or necessity ever arose in *any* line, they would be as ready to meet it and to do their duty as though she had subjected them to severe training of any kind.

“When the war came, and *all our boys* (Papa and my two brothers) went, I felt that to calmly sit at home and hold my hands, and to read in the newspapers the accounts of *their* dangers and of the needs in the hospitals—and do *nothing* about it at all—would be maddening!

“I felt that *surely*, with a willing heart and willing hands and feet, and an obedient spirit, I could do *something*—no matter *how trivial*—for some one; and I *knew* I could help my own if they were sick—and I just *must* be near them.

“Everybody told me what a *vast* mistake I was making; that I could do *no* good, and would do a great deal of harm, as I would get sick at once and would require care and cause a great deal of anxiety to others. And my swell friends were inexpressibly shocked at the idea.

“I applied to the Government, and was not accepted because I was not a trained nurse. Then I tried the D. A. R.—of which organization I am a

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member—with the same result. I had no assignment and had to fight my own way, inch by inch and step by step, against the advice of *everyone*—all Papa's friends and my own, both old and young. I had not *one* word of encouragement from beginning to end; and it was bitterly hard, as you can readily understand.

“When we reached Guantanamo with thirty trained nurses on board, we were informed that none but immunes could enter Santiago, on account of the prevalence of yellow fever there; and I was told that I must go on to Porto Rico. But General Miles kindly sent word from his ship, that if I still persisted in entering that fever-stricken place, after all the dangers were laid before me—and the advice of all in authority to the contrary—I might do so. The Assistant Surgeon General told me that he considered it almost certain death for me to go; but I gladly availed myself of the permission, as Papa and my brothers were there.

“All the trained nurses went on to Porto Rico. We never had any trained nurses in Santiago, as we had only immunes. I was the only non-immune who was ever allowed to enter.

“When I first reached there, I rode on a man's saddle on a rough cavalry horse, seven miles in the country to Papa's camp, and found Joe desperately

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ill with yellow fever; and Papa did not think he would recover. It was my good fortune to be able to render him some service and make him a little more comfortable. I went out on horseback in the morning, and returned at night.

“When he began to get better, I was placed in charge of a hospital in Santiago; and then followed the most beautiful, sacred and precious experience of my whole life. I shall always be devoutly and humbly thankful for having the opportunity of rendering some slight service to those gallant soldiers, whose patient endurance and noble fortitude, in those long, hot, agonizing, fevered days in the hospital were simply beyond expression.

“It was a wonderful privilege to be able to observe the grand heroism of my fellow-countrymen. The admiration and reverence which the hospital taught me for the character of the American soldier—in the face of *any* enemy—is to me a priceless treasure.

“I was on my feet from five in the morning until *late* every night, and yet I never knew an ache, or a pain, or a sense of heat or fatigue, so long as I had the privilege of serving in the hospitals at Santiago and Montauk. I put my whole heart and soul in my work, as a prayer that God would spare my own beloved; and I was never unmindful of the

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wonderful blessings of having all three of my own come home safely."

* * * * *

How finite is our human wisdom—even in its love!

With that pure prayer in her heart, and spoken by her every action, this loving girl was to feel His hand laid upon her and hers with a heaviness well nigh past the bearing. Their "Bonny Boy" went from them so full of life and hope and happiness—so wholly severed from aught of gloom and woe. He came back with the tide, cold and still forever in the flesh; but—as has been so tenderly told—with the amaranthine crown of the martyr to duty haloed about his fair brow.

But the loving heart—well nigh broken by the blow—humbly poured itself out in a great, unshaken Trust. In her own poem on her loss, Annie Wheeler wrote:

I was there upon the waters wild,
And took his hand;
And, thro' the gloom,
Led safely home

My child!

* * * * *

Miss Wheeler tells her own story of her work. It is the simple recital of a simple-hearted girl, with a brave spirit and a pure soul. But it is history, too, though with more than history's truth and earnestness and pathos; and between its lines we

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read volumes of the unwritten story of our war with Spain.

When that army was recalled, to recuperate on its own shores, this constant girl refused to leave the charges she had learned to love and venerate in their simplicity of bravery and endurance, and who now needed her more than ever.

Camp Wickoff, at Montauk, was a hot-bed of fever and other camp-diseases; the men—worn, emaciated and ill fed—were worse prepared to fight their insidious foe. Miss Wheeler's father was commandant, with powers almost autocratic reposed in him by special and personal order of the president, who so fully knew and trusted him.⁷ But the daughter went her way as simply as the hired nurses, seeking no single favor or privilege beyond that highest one to her—mitigation of suffering. She walked those hideous wards with a great glory of charity on her face; with the song in her heart that another grand woman penned:

These wounds are more precious than ghastly;
Time presses *her* lips to each scar,
As she chants of a glory that vastly
Transcends all the horrors of war!

Then—there on the very altar of her self-abnegation—came the blow that, for the moment, froze the pulses in all the hearts that had held first and closest the life of her “Bonny boy.” Unspeakable

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in its suddenness and *seeming* cruelty, it prostrated the fearless old warrior, his unselfish daughters and his brave soldier son.

Then, when the good old blood that had sent them all to face duties and dangers—trivial to nothingness now, before this giant woe—began once more to move through their veins, the daughter and the father went back to duty; outwardly resigned, and ministering to those entrusted to them.

It was the epic of heroic selflessness !

When Montauk was no more, Miss Wheeler found her busy—and now skillful—hands fully occupied at Huntsville. Thence—when need for her ministration no longer held her there—she went to St. Luke's Hospital, at New York, for a practical finishing course in army hospital work. She had enlisted once in Charity's white-clad army, as a volunteer. She had determined that, next time, she would show her service-chevron, as a "veteran."

One reminiscence of Miss Wheeler's past is *a propos* to her present. One of the author's friends was on the train that bore her home from Knoxville, after she had assisted at the wedding of her friend, Miss McGhee, to Mr. C. C. Neely, of Memphis. Their fellow traveler was an old woman from Walker county, Georgia; a simple old woman, green as the most astrigent persimmon, *en*

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route to visit her son in Texas. This nervous old dame—who had perhaps never left home before—had been robbed at the depot. She rent the air with sobs; between them repeated her piteous tale, “like Niobe, all tears,” and finally went off into real hysterics.

Miss Annie Wheeler—a young, untried girl and, of course, unknown to fame—had never seen the poor old creature before; but she promptly took her in charge, comforted her—with all her father’s promptitude and all her own gentleness of speech and touch; and finally mastered the rebellious nerves. Then, practical as well as beneficent, she took up a collection, made good the old stranger’s loss, and sent her on her way rejoicing.

And now, when fame and honors have found her, hiding from them, she innocently writes her friend: “I cannot say that I have a natural aptitude for nursing.”

But while pursuing her even way, bowed by a weight that made all words almost unmeaning, the heart of a whole people was speaking to her; first in popular acclaim, later through more formal modes.

For the first time in the history of the state, the General Assembly of Alabama passed a vote of thanks to one of her daughters for public services.

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The joint resolution, introduced into the house by Mr. Wallace, of Madison, was passed unanimously under suspension of the rules; the senate taking similar action immediatly upon that vote. This exceptional joint resolution reads:

Whereas, Alabama's beloved daughter, Miss Annie Early Wheeler, inspired by patriotism, saw fit to follow the invading army of our Government into Cuba; and there did administer to the sick and comfort the dying soldiers, amid the horrors of war and dread of plague; therefore be it

Resolved: by this House—the Senate concurring—that the State of Alabama thanks,—and the same be and are hereby extended by Alabama's General Assembly to this Noble Woman, for her brave deeds and unexampled devotion to her country.

Resolved, further: That this resolution be engrossed, and original signatures of his Excellency the Governor, and with those of the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate, be signed thereto; and that the Secretary of State be, and is hereby instructed to forward to Miss Wheeler a copy of this resolution, together with the compliments of the State of Alabama.

The letter of transmission enclosing the resolution, reads as follows:

STATE OF ALABAMA,
OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE,
MONTGOMERY, January 31, 1899.

My Dear Miss Wheeler: It gives me great pleasure to forward you, with the compliments of the



TRANSPORT "ALLEGHANY," No. 17.

ON WHICH MAJOR-GENERAL JOSEPH WHEELER AND STAFF WENT TO CUBA.

JOSEPH WHEELER.

State of Alabama, by this mail, a copy of joint resolution which was passed both by the House and the Senate of Alabama, by unanimous vote of each body.

I beg to suggest that never before, according to my information, has the Alabama General Assembly done so much honor to any woman, and it gives me pleasure to assure you that the members of the legislative body feel that they have honored themselves in thus complimenting you.

With the greatest respect, Yours truly,
ROBERT P. McDAVID,
Secretary of State.

But, although this is the first time she has been thanked in those historic halls, by formal resolution, Miss Wheeler had been honored there before by genuine impulse of manly admiration. That deserved compliment came spontaneously to the lips of the chief of our armies and navies, who had met, and been instructed by her, in the sad details of need at Montauk. On his reception by its governor, in the capitol of her native state, during his late tour, President McKinley said :

“Alabama, like all states of the Union, North and South, has been loyal to the flag, and steadfastly devoted to the American nation and to American honor. * * * * Everybody is talking about General Wheeler, one of the bravest of the brave. But I wish to speak to you of that sweet little

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daughter, who followed him to Santiago, and ministered to the sick at Montauk!"

But not alone do men honor and praise this modest, placid girl. At their latest session in Washington city, the Daughters of the Revolution—of which she is a member—paid her the tribute of election as Vice President General.

Of course Miss Wheeler accepted the honor; but immediately thereafter she wrote to a loyal and sympathetic friend, in all the simplicity of meritorious modesty:

"They generously made me a Vice President General, which proves how much they all loved the soldiers, and would gladly have done better than I, if they had had the opportunity; and they have no way of showing it now, except to confer this honor upon their humble sister-woman, who had the good fortune to be a personal witness to the heroism of our soldiers."

Truly did those men Annie Early Wheeler so well served, and still loves so well, name her their "Army Angel."

As no woman of this century has done her duty, as it revealed itself to her, better or more selflessly, so none has been more lovingly named. Her title of soul-nobility will live with her, and after her, when she is no longer only the *Army Angel*.

VII . IN "RECONSTRUCTION" DAYS.

There is no political Brown-Sequard.

The story of the nations teaches that the "elixir of life" cannot be injected by the politico-economic hypodermic.

All attempts to force, under the skin of a people, unaccustomed political toxicants have produced only tumors. These have been followed, often, by blood poison; never by actual sanity.

In this simple truth lies the one crucial—perhaps the only *real*—problem of "expansion" today.

To prove this, it is only necessary to glance at the present map of Europe, in the light of her past history; to consider the "empire" erected by the needs of British commerce, and cemented by the astute shopmanship of D'Israeli.

No thinker need look upon the skyrockety uneasiness of William, the Restless, to recall

How dearly the Pole loves "his Father", the Czar.

But, happily, America has nothing Tartar in all her composite make-up. And President McKinley has never been wont to play "the Czar." That potentate of cis-Atlantic steppes sits, self-enthroned, at the eastern end of the avenue; and it is

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plainly as evident as announced that he is "against *expansion*."

But the problem of the new possessions is not to *reconstruct* them, by what *Tony Lumpkin* calls the "rule of thumb"; rather to assimilate them after their swallowing, by the slower but more digestive process of Americanizing in fact.

"Reconstruction," as it was misnamed, only bred new and dangerous germs in the southern body-politic. Out of its forced syringe came the scalawag and carpetbagger; new forms and noisome, and dangerous to sectional health.

Indeed, under that attempt at "heroic surgery" to cure ill-diagnosed troubles, the local victims of malpractice quivered on the vivisection table, almost in *articulo mortis*. That the quackery did not kill the national patient as well, is due solely to the strength of his original constitution.

Not even a glance at General Wheeler's *post bellum* career could fail to take in something of that unsavory, while unhappy, era that followed the close of actual war with what was

The viler, as underhand—not openly—bearing the sword.

His earliest political steps were taken over the hot smouldering of disrupted conditions; their crust still hot, and threatening each moment to burst anew into consuming flame.

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He had moved to Alabama, while she was still in the crushing coil of the political constrictor—whose sire was greed—whose dam was powerlust. Its fangs were sucking her substance; its fetid breath parching effort into sickened spasm; its evil bulk swelling with unwonted glut.

The fair and once strong victim—shackled by weight of myopic legislation—was struggling in weakening effort to be free. But already the drain had sapped her powers; and as yet no Persens had come to slay her tormentor.

Substance, effort—almost hope—had withered in her veins: only the heroic spirit lived amid the hot fumes of the modern Medusa's baleful breath.

All of the truths of that era—imposed upon one-half of the same people by the folly of its other moiety—will probably never be written in history. Few of them are yet known, save to its surviving sufferers.

In this era of "peace and good will," in which all the Union joins hands, it is no intent of the writer to revive recollections that had best be buried—if they prove not as Eugene Aram's murdered man, and be not refused hiding even by the grave. But those times made men. Those who were made already, it developed into the paladins of peace. And one of these was Joseph Wheeler.

Therefore, this is needful glance at a period that—God be thanked!—can never come again; a period

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that had not come then, had other than a thing of whim and straw filled the seat of his martyred predecessor. For it is as true as Holy Writ that there had been no "Reconstruction" had Lincoln lived. There could have been none had a firm and deft touch, like that of the present executive, been upon the helm.

In either case, the protocols written under the lifting smoke of battle between Grant and Lee—Sherman and Jo. Johnston—would have been carried out. The worn and depleted South would have been given time to rest—then to recuperate, instead of being thrust, unarmed and unfriended, into a new and viler struggle, equally for honor and for life!

But the echo of the murderous madman's pistol shattered the nerves of all the North; driving men to a frenzy that was part vengeance, and more fear. Rigor seemed to the popular mind there the only means of conserving the new and hard-won peace; cunning greed and unscrupulous ambition played upon popular error, for their own ends.

None paused to consider that this *must* be a flat and disastrous failure; that it hurt the North in every material view, by "frosting" the laying faculties of her golden-goose; that it was puerile and illogical from every point of view save that of the nimble *Autolycus*, who flocked into its opportunities

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from every section; "his pickers and stealers" twitching for "swag."

None reasoned how it must, in the nature of things, at last hoist petard-like the radical engineers who invented it. It had become a popular cry; madness ruled the hour; none asked on what the cry was based. Yet, to this day—when Peace sits under her olive, sprouting as Jonah's gourd; when oldtime enemies hold combined reunions, and Mason-and-Dixonites have coiled their "line" upon national fences—no man has told us in what we were to be reconstructed, nor by what process.

It was flatly illogical, on either horn of its dilemma. If the process was to be material, it was as the highwayman should ask his freshly-robbed victim to join him in a corner in wheat; if political, and to keep the Union of the states intact, it was flatly giving the lie to the successful issue of the war just waged to keep us in, when we too hastily tried to get out; if moral, then verily strange priests indeed were sent to our conversion.

Looking back at it now, through the bright vista of successful years succeeding, there is a grim humor mixed with all the ghastliness of "Reconstruction's" days; yet coldly true glimpses of their actual realities, just here, may serve the "truth of history." *Haud inexpertus loquor*. The writer was participant in those scenes; a private in the great

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struggle in which Joseph Wheeler was one of the leaders.

And even then—in his political youth, and in a new community amid almost strangers—the indomitable will, perseverance and discretion of the man early made him a marked one. Ere long, these traits showed so clearly, in the light of his absolute honesty and untiring zeal, that he became the idol, no less than the leader, of his home people.

The mistake of; “Reconstruction” left no tangible residuum, save in the pockets of the adventurers it bred. It retarded the real—and inevitable—*material* reconstruction of the South, for ten years of absolute uselessness and for twenty more of their usufruct.

Directly out of it grew the “Solid South”—itself a bugaboo drawback to steady and rapid recuperation, but a necessity for very existence and self-preservation, where

The spirit of murder worked, in the very means of life.

The Solid South, concreted into a threatening political enginery, antagonized capital and retarded immigration. Meanwhile it gave no adequate compensation, save in moral regards. Those reconstruction fungi, the carpetbaggers, came from all sections with greedy impartiality. They were from East and West and North; their only needed



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IN FULL DRESS UNIFORM OF MAJOR-GENERAL.

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credentials being alleged "loyalty" to the government they disgraced. Brains, or capital; even honesty and clean reputation, were in no wise essentials for such success as they came to achieve—these bummers, camp followers and scullions of the regular army of the victorious party. They came for booty only; but to filch, not conquer, it. They loudly vaunted themselves the saviors of the raw and ignorant freedmen; lived among them, and preyed upon their credulous natures. They held continuous camp-meeting; leading in prayer for abolition of the hand-tied white native, and sang everywhere the legendary hymn of forty acres and a mule. Among them were few real old soldiers, fewer still who had won titles they disported, or had had either credit, or social standing, at home.

The "seizin'" of the Norman and his iron grip upon the Saxon throat were gently astute statesmanship—the touch of the velvet glove—when compared with this carpetbag invasion. The better class of incoming aliens could not endure the appellation, nor blind themselves to its sure results. Yet, a not unnatural prejudice makes the less thoughtful southerner class all strangers, incoming at that moment, under the general head.

In General Wheeler's state there were and are notable proofs that all the new comers were not "birds of a feather." A number of them were

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democrats—opposed to the dominant party and literally loathing its then methods of coercive conversion. With one of these the writer chanced to be long and closely associated in business and politics—William Dalton Mann, now of New York. He had been a gallant foe, when commanding his regiment of Michigan cavalry—as is vouched by that best authority on such, General Wade Hampton—but was a rampant democrat. He came to Alabama as a resident and citizen; invested in property and manufacturing; bought the old and then noted *Mobile Register* and poured hot shot into the vile Falstaffian army of the invasion of filch.

There were also true and honest men among the republican newcomers; some of the government officials doing as Colonel Mann had done, in all things save the political one. The present collector of the port of Mobile, for instance, has done more than most natives to build up the mining interests of his adopted state. General Joseph W. Burke was a gallant soldier; he has been, for near a lifetime now, a most useful and respected citizen of Alabama. So has his official neighbor and old war comrade, Colonel Morris D. Wickersham, the district attorney; both men having held their offices under different administrations, backed by the unanimous approval of local democrats. So has the past and present postmaster of the same city, Hon.

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P. D. Barker; a lifelong Alabamian, whose ample means and business sagacity have been devoted to building up her interests, where blinder politicians began by tearing them down. Another native and lifelong republican—ever equally staunch for his principles and his people, and withal a modest scholar and humanitarian—is Hon. Fred. G. Bromberg. He has never departed from his party tenets; but the *democrats* of the first district sent him to congress; his work for harbors, quarantine and other material advance was the pioneer effort; and his labor as national commissioner at Chicago's exposition made his state prominent, without the shadow of an exhibit.

• These examples come up at random, but there are many others. Such men saw and despised the methods of the reconstruction rabble; and their judgment of it doubtless brought it to too-late death and indecent burial. They sympathized with the disfranchised and law-manacled home people. They became *de facto* southerners, so soon as they invested money, or effort, in the South; for they realized that the future outcome of this section—her real *construction*—must come through its native leaders only. Thus, some of the best and most progressive citizens of the South today—whether they be democrats or republicans—are men who came in the wake of the carpet-bag invasion.

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When Joseph Wheeler became an Alabamian, that state was in fullest squeeze of the scaly constrictor. So were his native state, and that of his first adoption. But he came to one, where the folds perhaps were tightest ; and his clear and full knowledge of that truth in no sort served to affect his resolve.

Like the rest of us, this true southerner saw that the then condition worked destruction to true nationalism. He saw every office of profit gobbled by hungry adventurers, through the votes of their negro dupes—driven like hogs to the ballot-pens. These were permitted to elect themselves to the legislatures, town councils and police courts ; to any places that carried but nominal salary. But the governors, judges, collectors, marshals, mayors—all fat and important offices of the South—were parcelled out between the carpetbaggers and the scalawags. They even forced themselves into the highest positions in the Federal government ; filling the seats of former clean and brainy congressmen, and making the cheeks of senators tingle with their vicinage.

Where there were not men enough to go around, the offices were duplicated in the elect ; and it is a well known fact that, during this worse than “Reign of Terror,” one individual frequently held two, three, even four salaried positions, state and national, at the same time. But that individual never

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was woolly-headed. The blackness in him never showed outwardly on his skin.

This was the *first* "Solid South !"

In those halcyon days of the game of grab, state governments and the national legislature had, of necessity, to be of one stripe. It mattered little to more radical purposes that the stripes worn by some of them might previously have been of *another* pattern. So long as election returns came in on the desired side, no awkward questions were asked about the returning officers. Votes were all that were wanted in congress and the electoral college. If those votes came, it mattered nothing what mongrel adventurers sat in the former seats of Clay, Calhoun, Tucker, Benjamin and their peers.

Neither did it matter, then, if the credit of the war-impoverished and product-throttled states was recklessly pledged for ruinous sums ; if taxes, and interest imposts wholly unbearable, were levied upon a people barely able to find the means of daily life.

And the sums thus wrung out of them were not squandered, but hoarded. No public improvements, no schools, no civic protection were set up by these germ rulers. But the salaries were lavish exceeding ; for *they* went into their own pockets. The people were left to hold the bag—when it was emptied. They are holding it, in some places, today.

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There has been some just, and more unjust, talk about southern "repudiation." There has been much fiction written about "the unreconciled slave-owners of the South." Few of the talkers either know, or care, about the *origin* of a load of debt, piled through vicarious statute upon southern shoulders by alien and dishonest hands, until it became crushing—ruinous—insupportable !

When the free man of the East, or the West, reads of "white supremacy" it excites no feeling, save perhaps antagonism. It carries with it no meaning deeper than a sectional political cry. In the light of the literal facts, here barely outlined, the term may take for him the new significance of resistance to robber oppression ; self-protection and self-existence.

It cannot seem strange that the South—conscious of her great possibilities, harrassed, goaded and bound for flaying alive—at last rose solidly to shake off alien leeches that were sucking her life blood, for enrichment of their own base veins. It cannot be wondered that re-enfranchisement made the ballot of the Solid South more deadly than her discarded rifles ; that her people marched to the polls in unbroken phalanx—on their banners the refrain of the real national hymn : "God and our Native Land !"

The legacy left by that "Reconstruction" was ghastly to contemplate. Its heritors were well

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nigh hopeless. In many states loomed mountainous debts. In *every* one was clogged production. The richest natural section of the Union was scarcely capable of feeding itself. It was utterly hopeless of meeting the vicarious obligations that had gone to fatten the political vultures, preying upon her vitals.

When the modern Prometheus struck the chains from his wrists, and stepped from his rock of torment, nominally free, he might well have groaned because the beak of the Thing fattening upon him had not proved fatal !

Verily the South could only feel the truth of Tennyson's lines:

The children born of thee are sword and fire;
Red ruin and the breaking up of laws !

It was amid this chaos of disruption, cruelty and doubt of the future, that the political life of Joseph Wheeler found birth.

His new home needed soldiers of another sort than his past career had made him. His new comrades—ready of will and steadfast in courage, even in face of deadly-seeming odds—needed a leader. Then the boy who had drilled his little fellows of childhood, from instinct; the youth who had later given up his life's pride and hope for duty to his native soil; the grand leader of men in the red

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front of battle—all heard “assembly” blow once more.

The young lawyer fell into ranks; his clear voice rang out into prompt answer: “*Here!*” In every skirmish of this new and savage warfare of “Peace”; in its councils and its weary watches, Wheeler was on duty; quiet, sleepless, untiring as he had been in the saddle of the active cavalry general. No weak spot in the line of his predatory enemy missed his keen eye; no vantage for his own side was lost to his quick intuition.

Rapidly he rose to be a man of mark; was promoted to leadership—as he had been otherwheres—without its seeking; his one idea, duty, and his one ambition—country! Then, when the fight was won in the field, and the routed Goths and Vandals of thievery were sent howling back over those borders they had crossed for spoliation only, Wheeler’s people turned to the modest and faithful soldier of peace and offered him reward.

But the office sought the man. How well he has filled it his countrymen of all shades of opinion—and of skin—know today. Those nearest to him, and thus knowing best, prove their faith by the long and continuous service they have claimed from him.

They believe—as does the writer—that their congressman would never have accepted his seat had



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he not believed that he could there best serve his own people, and *all* the people; that he would not have left it—dearly as he loved the soldier’s life—from impulse, or for honors, had he not felt that by going he could best serve his country.

That is Joe Wheeler’s way!

*V III.—“WHEELER’S LEAP” AT DUCK RIVER.

So far there has been due reticence from the over-told tale of battle, siege and charge. With much of glamor about them, these pages have not recorded their subject’s many brilliant charges, strategic *coups* and

Hair breath ’scapes, in th’ imminent deadly breach.

But this good rule *must* be proved by exception, where temptation is so strong, and incident so exceptional.

* Most of the facts and incidents of this chapter and the two succeeding it are from a “Sketch of General Wheeler,” published in Armstrong’s Magazine. Its author withheld his name, though he is an old friend of the general. I have endeavored, as far as possible, to follow his style of narrative, in spite of knowing how hard it is to desiccate and can another’s production. — T. C. DE L.

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“Wheeler’s Leap” will go down in history beside the famous plunge of Israel Putnam, down “the stairs” at Horseneck.

A private trooper, who plunged his horse, by the side of General Wheeler, over the banks of Duck river, furnishes some of the data for this description :

Rosecrans’ army was at Murfreesboro; Bragg’s at Tullahoma. A forward movement was begun by the Federals on June 22d, 1863. Bragg decided—in view of the danger of giving battle, with the Tennessee river in his rear—to fall back on Chattanooga. Immense quantities of commissary and quartermaster supplies had been collected and stored at Shelbyville, on the northern bank of Duck river. It was a matter of the last importance to Bragg’s army that these supplies should be moved to some point safe from capture. Wheeler, at that time, was in command of all Bragg’s cavalry. Forrest, then subordinate to him, had his command near Franklin and Spring Hill. Bragg had ordered the cavalry to withdraw to the south bank of Duck river; Forrest to form a junction with Wheeler at Shelbyville, on the afternoon of June 27th.

Wheeler had left a force at Guy’s Gap to hold the enemy in check until Forrest could unite with him. The Federal cavalry, commanded by Major-General D. S. Stanley, and supported by a corps of infantry under command of General Gordon Granger, advanced upon Guy’s Gap. General Wheeler had stationed a force of 1,200, under his own personal

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command, about two miles in front of Shelbyville, on the Murfreesboro pike. His orders were to hold the enemy in check at all hazards. With this little band, opposed by overwhelming numbers, he kept the Federal columns back for three full hours.

Dr. John A. Wyeth—son of Hon. Louis Wyeth, so long beloved and honored as one of Alabama's best judges—was at that time a private in Wheeler's cavalry. In an article in *Harper's Weekly* of June 18th, 1898, he gives so graphic a description of that battle that one can almost hear the rattle of the carbines and see the rush and impact of opposing forces. An extract from his pen—as bright and incisive as the surgeon's knife he wields with so much skill—will not be out of place here:

“Of about a score of such ‘scraps,’ some of which of larger growth have passed to a place on the bloodiest pages of history, the writer does not recall a contest which, for downright pluck in giving and taking heavy knocks through several hours, surpasses this Shelbyville ‘affair.’ The carbines and rifles were flashing and banging away at times; and scattering shots, when the game was at long range, and then, when a charge came on and the work grew hot, the spiteful, sharp explosions swelled into a crackling roar like that of a cane-brake on fire, when, in a single minute, hundreds of the boiler-like joints have burst asunder. Add to all the whizzing, angry whirr of countless leaden missiles which split the air about you; the hoarse,

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unnatural shouts of command—for in battle all sounds of the human voice seem out of pitch and tone; the wild, defiant yells and the answering huzzas of the opposing lines; the plunging and rearing of frightened horses; the charges here and there of companies or squadrons, which seem to be shot out from the main body as flames shoot out of a house on fire; here and there the sharp, quick cry from some unfortunate trooper who did not hear one leaden messenger—for only those are heard which have passed by; the heavy, soggy striking of the helpless body against the ground; the scurrying runaway of the frightened horse, as often into danger as out of it, whose empty saddle tells the foe that there is one rifle less to fear! All these sights and sounds go to make up the confusing medley of a battle-field. So, for nearly three hours, passed this little fight.

(In the dialect of the southern darkey, the writer of the above “Sho wur thar.”)

“The enemy were repulsed in the attack on the center of the Confederate line. Time and again they assaulted the plucky little band, each time to be driven back in confusion. General Wheeler was everywhere, encouraging and animating the men to stand firm. His reputation for ubiquity, for dash, for ‘bull-dog obstinacy,’ and for ‘nerves of steel’ was never so well earned as on that day, when he saved the wagon trains of Bragg’s army and rescued Forrest from disaster. About 5 o’clock in the afternoon, when there was a comparative lull in the attack, General Wheeler—leaving where

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they were, Colonel A. A. Russell's Fourth Alabama cavalry, consisting of about 200 men, with orders to 'stand until they were ridden down, and then for every man to take care of himself'—withdrew the rest of his command to the south bank of the river.

"The last wagon had crossed the bridge; the cavalry and artillery were all safely over the river, and the bridge was about to be fired, when Major Rambeau, of General Forrest's staff, rode up and informed General Wheeler that General Forrest with two brigades, was within two miles of Shelbyville, and coming at a rapid rate to cross the river. General Wheeler at once appreciated the danger in which General Forrest was placed. Although the enemy was already in strong force in the outskirts of the town, General Wheeler—calling for volunteers to follow him, with the gallant General Martin and 500 men of his division, and with two pieces of artillery—re-crossed the river to charge the enemy and drive them back and hold the bridge until Forrest could cross.

"It was a generous and a daring deed, and characteristic of the impetuous and self-sacrificing man he has ever been.

"Although he and Martin charged the enemy with great intrepidity, and for a while drove them back, the odds were too great. The Union cavalry rallied and charged them in turn; riding through and over them. The two pieces of artillery—having nothing but solid shot—were of little use. The enemy sabred the gunners and passing on took possession of the bridge. Adopting the narrative

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of the old trooper before mentioned: a regiment of the enemy came down the river in our rear and took possession of a little island in the middle of the river above the bridge. They also formed a line of battle parallel with the river and seemed satisfied that they had Wheeler hemmed in with no possibility of escape.

“When the general saw this he gave the word: ‘Every man take care of himself the best he can.’ With sabre drawn, myself by his side, cutting his way through the enemy, he made for the bank of the river. Fortunately the stream was swollen. Shot at with carbines and pistols and cut at with sabres, he put spurs to his horse and plunged down the steep bank into the river, I following him the best I could, the enemy shooting at us from flank and rear, from island and from river bank. Undaunted, the general swam right on to the opposite bank and rallied his men on the other side. I was less fortunate, getting no further than the island, where I was captured.

“General Wheeler, dressed in a blouse shirt, sword in hand, hat off, charging through the enemy’s line and leaping down the precipitous river bank, presented a picturesque sight rarely witnessed in battle. It is estimated that about fifty men were lost in this daring attempt to escape. This movement of General Wheeler, in re-crossing the river, was not necessary to save General Bragg’s wagon train. That had already been accomplished; but it was done on a grand impulse to save from disaster General Forrest, an officer who, with all his magnificent genius and brilliant success when

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commanding alone, was a little restive under the orders of his superiors. There is in all history no nobler, or more chivalrous, act than was performed by this young cavalry leader on that eventful day."

IX—THE RIDE ROUND ROSECRANS.

No reference to the great Confederate's career should omit his raid into East and Middle Tennessee—his "Ride Around Rosecrans' Army." General Wheeler, with the divisions of Generals Wharton and Martin and a part of Forrest's command, forded the Tennessee river at Cotton Port, about fifty miles above Chattanooga, on September 30, 1863. He carried with him in all about 3,700 men. No description of this great and resultful feat—heretofore discussed as typical—could have the interest of General Wheeler's own words. In his report he says:

"The enemy had occupied the opposite bank, and immediately concentrated a force nearly, if not quite, equal to our own, to resist the crossing. General Crook, with a large force of Federal cavalry, confronted me and disputed the passage. The three brigades of General Forrest, which had been ordered to accompany me in the raid, were mere

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skeletons, scarcely averaging 500 effective men each. They were badly armed, had but a small supply of ammunition, and their horses were in a horrible condition, having been marched continuously for three days and nights without removing saddles. The men were worn out, and without rations. The brigade commanders made most earnest protests against their commands being called upon to move in this condition. With this state of things, the worst horses were allowed to be returned to the rear.

“On crossing, we assailed and drove the enemy about three miles. On the morning of October 2nd I reached Sequatchie Valley, and at 3 o'clock on the following morning proceeded down towards Jasper with about 1,500 men. After traveling about ten miles we overtook and captured thirty-two six-mule wagons, which were destroyed. The mules were carried along with the command. On approaching Anderson's Cross Roads we were met by a considerable force of cavalry, which we charged and drove before us. We here found a large train of wagons, which proved to extend from the top of Walden's Ridge for a distance of ten miles towards Jasper. This train was heavily loaded with ordnance, quartermaster and commissary stores. The number of wagons was variously estimated at from 800 to 1,500. No one saw, perhaps, more than half the train. The quatermaster in charge stated that there were 800 six-mule wagons besides a great number of sutler wagons. The train was guarded by a brigade of cavalry in front and a brigade of cavalry in the rear; and on the flank, where we attacked, were stationed two regiments of infantry.



THE WHEELER HOMESTEAD, AT WHEELER, ALA.

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“After a warm fight, the guards were defeated and driven off, leaving the entire train in our possession. Selecting such mules and wagons as we needed, we destroyed the train by burning the wagons and sabering or shooting the mules. During this work my pickets were driven in on both flanks and on the rear. Fortunately, the enemy was repulsed and we remained undisturbed for eight hours and until our work was thoroughly accomplished. Just before dark, as we were retiring, a large force of cavalry and infantry moved upon us from Stevenson, skirmishing with our rear until dark. During this, General Martin, Colonel Avery and Lieutenant-Colonel Griffith, were distinguished for gallantry. During the night I moved over Cumberland mountains and early next morning joined General Wharton near the foot of the mountains and went forward to attack McMinville. The enemy was pressing close behind us, but we succeeded in capturing the place with an enormous supply of quartermaster and commissary stores, with the fortifications and garrison, which numbered 537 men with arms, accoutrements, etc.; 200 horses were also captured. The day and night were occupied in destroying the stores, a locomotive and train of cars, and a bridge over Hickory creek, such of the stores as could be transported having been distributed to the command. On the following day we marched to Murfreesboro. After making a demonstration upon the place, we moved over and, after a short fight, captured a strong stockade guarding the railroad bridge over Stone’s river, with its garrison of fifty-two men. The day

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was occupied in cutting down the bridge and thoroughly burning the timbers. We also burned the railroad ties and track for three miles below the bridge.

“The following day we destroyed a train and a quantity of stores at Christiana and Fosterville, and destroyed all the railroad bridges and trestles between Murfreesboro and Wartrace, including all the large bridges at and near the latter place and capturing the guards. We also captured and destroyed a large amount of stores of all kinds at Shelbyville, the enemy running from his strong fortifications at our approach.”

There is nothing studied, or ornate, in this direct story of the busy and hard-worked cavalry chief, written from “Headquarters in the Saddle,” so accustomed as to bring no vaunt. But it shows the working-man he ever is when he puts on his working-clothes; and it is given as a unique and little-known chapter of the history of those stirring days.

Wheeler devotes less than ten lines to the destruction of more than *ten miles* of wagon-trains; a blow of which the disastrous result is easily calculable by any reader. To the capture of McMinville—with 537 prisoners, 200 horses and “an enormous amount of quartermaster and commissary stores”—he devotes equally brief space.

This balance-sheet of a business-man of war was made while the items were fresh. It is taken

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from his report to General Bragg, October 30, 1863. Nine days were spent in making this circuit from the point of crossing in East Tennessee, to Muscle Shoals, where Wheeler re-crossed the river. In all that time not a day passed—scarcely an hour—in which he was not engaged in fighting the enemy:

“A reconnoissance was made towards Columbia, which caused the enemy to evacuate that place and destroy all their stores, including 30 days’ rations for the garrison.”

The fording of the river at Muscle Shoals was accomplished without difficulty, the enemy reaching the river just after the Confederates had crossed.

During the raid 1,000 prisoners were captured, and General Wheeler’s estimate of the number of killed and wounded of the enemy was that it would cover his entire loss. Apropos of this raid, it is rather amusing at this late day, when all the painful memories of the civil war are being wiped out by a later one, to read a congratulatory “special field order” of General Rosecrans, telling of:

“The brilliant pursuit of the enemy’s cavalry under Wheeler by the cavalry command of this army, especially Crook’s division and Stokes’ Chicago Board of Trade battery, which were foremost in the fight.” *** “The general commanding thanks the cavalry for their valuable services in pursuit of the enemy, which resulted in driving him in confusion across the Tennessee river. He

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compliments them for inaugurating the new practice of coming to close quarters without delay."

The reader sees here the two pictures. Nor is it less amusing that Wheeler's report mentions the loss of some of his artillery, stating :

"While crossing the mountains our artillery carriages became much shattered, and finally two of them broke down ; we repaired them several times, but finally the harness became broken, and finding it impossible to drag them on, these two pieces were abandoned. One was an old iron gun which had been condemned as useless at every inspection during the last year ; the other was a brass howitzer. On the evening of the 7th, while traveling slowly over a good road, one of the limbers of General Wharton blew up, tearing up everything in the vicinity ; this piece was also left. If the enemy found these pieces they will probably claim to have captured them, which claim will be false."

Answering this is the claim from that grave and able general, George H. Thomas, "Old Pap," in which he says :

"Enclosed I also send some papers captured from the rebels near Trenton by a scouting party from General Hooker's command, among which is an official report of his raid by the Rebel Wheeler, himself, in which he forgets to mention the loss of four of his guns at Farmington."

If "Old Pap" were living to-day, how he would laugh with "Little Joe" over the parallelism of these two accounts.

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In those bitter and busy days, Mars demanded all sacrifice of self from his votaries. The young general left tenderer and more inviting scenes, elsewhere detailed, and was soon off on another raid. This time it was through East and Middle Tennessee; but its details would be too lengthy for this limited article. It was in the rear of Sherman's army, during the Atlanta campaign. Having defeated Stoneman, McCook and Girard, Wheeler forded the Tennessee near Knoxville, in August, 1864, taking with him about 3,500 men. He captured a number of towns, destroyed railroads, and brought into their lines hundreds of cattle, which were joyfully received by the starving Confederates.

* At Franklin he had a hot fight with the enemy, in which was killed Major-General John H. Kelly, one of the noblest and most dashing officers of either army. The writer must pause to mention, with affection, this splendid type of southern manhood. He was an orphan boy from Wilcox County, Alabama. In some way he received his appointment to West Point through a friend in California, and was credited to that state. Brave Kelly! In his death expired the last of his race; but American manhood received a new lustre in the heroism of this splendid young officer.

* Verbatim from the Magazine 'Sketch.' A just tribute of a comrade.

X.—HIS RECORD IN CONGRESS.

The reader has seen that Joseph Wheeler is the same indefatigable man in legislation that he is in war. On national issues he is always a democrat true and tried. His speeches on the tariff and on finance are considered as among the ablest.

It is impracticable here to give any full description of so active, useful and brilliant a record as his; covering nearly twenty years in Congress. A few of the most important measures he presented and advocated must suffice.

He was the first man to introduce a bill for the pensioning of the survivors of the Mexican war. At first objection was made to this measure, because many ex-Confederates had served in both wars. Under the untiring assaults of the little congressman, however, this opposition soon gave way and a subsequent congress took the broad and philanthropic view of its originator, and passed it. Thus, ex-Confederates, as well as ex-Federals, who had assisted in raising Old Glory on the "halls of the Montezumas," shared in the pensions.

As a member of the committee on ways and means, General Wheeler has taken a leading part in all the great debates on the tariff in recent

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years. With his great statistical knowledge, analytical mind and deep research, he has been of incalculable assistance to his party. He is essentially a low tariff man—taking always the position that a tariff should be imposed on the labor and industry of the country for revenue only, and only to meet the needs of a government economically administered. He has defended this cardinal principle of democracy “in season and out of season.”

For clear logic, forcible expression and invincible argument, his speeches on the tariff will compare favorably with those of the ablest statesmen and debaters of either party.

The great questions of finance have also received his most earnest attention. He has never wearied of effort to bring about financial reform. He is a strong silver man, and his speeches on that phase of finance are the most lucid of any of its advocates.

He is regarded by his fellow-members as a perfect walking encyclopedia of information on all questions of tariff and finance. As has been well said by a leading journalist: “His tariff speech in opening the discussion on the Dingley bill, replying as he did to Chairman Dingley’s defense of his measure, is regarded as one of the ablest presentations of the democratic position of a tariff for revenue, as contradistinctive to the republican tariff for protection, ever been made in congress.”

HIS RECORD IN CONGRESS.

There is one great measure that has come before congress for years—a question equally local and national—which has always received General Wheeler's most earnest and untiring aid. This is the improvement of the navigation of the Tennessee river from Chattanooga to its mouth. He never relaxes his efforts in getting appropriations for this measure, so vital to the interest of the people of the Tennessee Valley, as well as to those of the whole country.

When General Wheeler champions a local or special measure in congress, he is almost irresistible. As an illustration: the bill for a Federal court-house, post-office and land office at Huntsville, Ala., had long been advocated by his predecessors in the house. This indefatigable worker was entrusted with this bill and, in a short while, his energy and personal influence with republicans as well as democrats, won, and to-day one of the prettiest Federal court-houses on this continent ornaments Huntsville.

His speech in favor of pensioning the heroes of the Mexican war was the strongest made on that subject, and the bill he introduced became the law almost in the exact words in which he prepared it. In the next Congress he introduced the Indian war pension bill, and that was finally reported and passed as he introduced it.



GENERAL WHEELER AND STAFF—TAMPA, FLA., JUNE 14, 1898.

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Lieut. Joseph Wheeler, Jr. | Lieut. J. H. Reeves. | Maj. W. B. Beach. |
| Capt. Wm. Astor Chanler. | Lieut. M. S. Steele. | |
| Capt. P. W. West. | Gen'l Guy V. Henry. | |
| Capt. Jos. L. Dickman. | | |

HIS RECORD IN CONGRESS.

His most remarkable success was in passing the bill for the relief of General Fitz John Porter. For fifteen years, unsuccessful efforts had been made to repair, by legislation, the gross injustice done to this gallant Federal. What a picture was here presented! The ex-Confederate, from convictions of right and justice, defending the Federal whom he had opposed in battle. The bill pending so long was finally placed in General Wheeler's hands. With military precision, with maps and drawings and a grouping of facts unanswerable, he worked out the problem and demonstrated that Porter, instead of having committed treason, had but done his duty. The bill became a law in the exact language in which he introduced it. It had been bitterly opposed by the most prominent men of the nation, both in and out of Congress, including General Logan, yet General Wheeler was supported by Republicans as well as Democrats, and carried it through triumphantly.

All of his speeches are prepared with infinite care. They are, as one writer says, "like propositions in mathematics, unanswerable." Weighed in the scales of the rhetorician, he could not be called an orator,—and yet he produces the effects of the orator; moves, persuades, and convinces men.

"His speech on the Force bill attracted great attention, and was commended by the democratic

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press throughout the United States, as well as by the greatest constitutional lawyers of the country, as the strongest and most profound argument ever made on the question of expediency, as well as on the constitutional right of congress to enact a bill similar to that."

The Force bill passed the lower house of congress, but the patient soldier and statesman, loving his whole country and ready to lay his life down for her, had the satisfaction of seeing it killed in the senate; and it is to be prayerfully hoped that it will never come before the national legislature again.

XI.—LATER DAYS.

The closer one looks at Joseph Wheeler, the more he wishes to see of him. His is one of those rare *ensembles* that improve under the microscope: its fineness of texture and closeness of grain showing no openings—ever under *expansion*.

So, coming to the predestined limits of this sketchy consideration, the reader may exclaim with her of Sheba: "And behold! the half was not told me!" Still, if some things have been told in it which are not familiar; if it looks at the character of the man of the hour at different angles, and under other lights from those heretofore held up, then

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the missing links may easily be supplied from contemporaneous history—notably in that of General Wheeler's own narrative. The aim has been not so much to give *facts*—familiar, or unknown—as to suggest the evolution of these out of the man.

The essay has been to show that truth, justice and charity are “the blessed three” that have guided this exceptional publicist in every action of his life. These salient characteristics seem to mellow and permeate his whole texture under Time's touch. His is the ingrain loyalty that begets loyalty.

Once during a hot congressional turn in Alabama, the writer was traveling in an almost empty day coach. A friend was discussing the chances of the several districts and asked:

“Do you think Wheeler's doubtful?”

Ere reply could be made, a voice from the rear roared out:

“Diyvil th' doubt! Th' jinrul's not th' sort ez doubts grow 'roun'.” The brawny, coatless, speaker moved towards the disputants, adding: “Oi'm a stranger ter yez, byes, but Oi wor wid th' jinrul in '62! An' more by token, Oi've laid no oi on 'im since. But Oi till yez it's th' vote Oi'd loike ter gie 'im, ef they'd lit me inter his deestrect! Oi till yez both there's no doubt in it wid th' jinrul. Doubts shlips aff Joe Weeler's charaktar, loike wather aff the fithers on a pig's back!”

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There was no laughing at this Celtic partisan's bull. His loyalty and truth were too apparent.

The author notes: It was during the famous "National Drill Encampment," which he had been called to manage, and in which the general took the same keen interest he shows in all that concerns his state, or his friends. His action there is too characteristic to be left untold.

The canvass city around the Washington monument was one the National Guards will long recall. Under its tents collected over twelve thousand of the "crack" drill experts of the Union; the very flower and pride of her volunteer ambition. The solitary "Lomax Rifles," of Mobile, were practically unknown at the North; but Congressman Wheeler knew every detail about his state, and he builded great hopes upon the metal of "his boys."

The drill tests—for which awards were to be announced only on the last day—were many and close; covering an entire week. Results were kept absolutely secret; and even the keen eyes of the general could not "pick the winner." The last day came; and over fifty thousand people packed the stands and grounds behind the White House. General Phil Sheridan, commanding the U. S. army, sat on the judges' stand, to present the prizes—many and rich—when their still unknown winners were made known to him. With him sat senators,

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foreign ministers, judges of high courts and noted soldiers ; and there too sat "Joe Wheeler," his eyes glinting and his face set and flushed, as if he were leading some deadly charge.

A great hush fell over the vast, palpitant throng, as Col. Black, 24th U. S. Infantry, chief of the board of judges, advanced and handed General Sheridan their list of awards. First, and to be champions of the Union, came the Lomax Rifles.

Off went General Wheeler's new silk hat ! Up into the air it flew ! The set features and gleaming eyes, unchained from suspense, grew merry and boyish in a flash ; and I am morally certain that the Alabamian never even heard, then and there, who had won second, or any place down the long list. It was everything for him that "his boys" were first—*Alabama victrix* !

General Sheridan had scarce spoken the last word of his very evident boredom of award, when "Little Joe" captured him, and insisted that he should go and speak a word of congratulation to the boys. Naturally enough, the other cavalry chief—who had scant sympathy for what he called "mustang soldiers"—declined the suggestion ; but it is not recalled that the Alabama victors missed him, and it is known that they prized General Wheeler's hearty and genuine commendation almost as much as their flag, medals, and \$5,000 prize.

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And speaking of the little hero's few inches recalls another story, of very recent days. Cramer, in his "Little Stories of the War" relates that the ever alert and restless cavalry chief popped into General Wade's tent, before Santiago; made some quick query, and disappeared. Shortly, a panting aide, searching for the ubiquitous chief, asked:

"General, is General Wheeler here?"

The leonine owner of the tent blew a cloud of smoke, as he answered doubtfully:

"I really can't tell you. He *was* here, and I did not see him go. Look behind that cracker box!"

Si non e vero e ben trovato. But Mr. Don did not have to look behind anything to find Joe Wheeler.

If the preceding pages have accomplished half of their intent they have shown Joseph Wheeler—as citizen, soldier, statesman, husband and father—a model for the youth of to-day to hold in view. Long as he has been in public life, no instance can be shown where he has used common trickery, made one single statement that was not true; or one "smutty" speech or allusion to win cheap laughter!

It has been shown that he is a churchman and a man of prayer, as was Stonewall Jackson. He did not line up his men and order: "Fire low, boys; and may the Lord have mercy on their souls!" but he did lay his patriot hopes and fears—for aught we know his very plans of battle—at the foot of the

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Throne nightly, and ask the one availing blessing upon them. Religion of the practical kind, that permeates the whole fiber and guides directly each action of life, however seemingly trivial, is his.

On one of his stumping tours, the congressman stopped with a constituent, proud to have him as a guest. When he had retired the host was chided by his wife for not leaving cool drinking water; and he tapped at the general's door with a fresh supply. He found his guest disrobed and on his knees, and was about to withdraw. The general rose at the moment, and the other began apology for his intrusion. The calm answer was:

"No intrusion, my good friend; none in the world. I always kneel and say my prayers to the good God, before I retire; and I am not ashamed to be seen upon my knees."

His Academy chum, General John M. Wilson, chief of the U. S. Engineer Corps, once said that, for many long years, he had never heard the hymn, "Onward, Christian Soldiers," without thinking of "Point" Wheeler.

The writer of the sketch recalls in it that Wheeler's exceptional retention as commander of cavalry; his reports, now a part of history, and President Davis' quoted condensation of them in his book, are not the sole records of his usefulness and of its recognition. He was thanked by joint

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resolution of the Confederate Congress; and the South Carolina legislature tendered thanks for his gallant defense of Aiken, in that state.

On May 11, 1864, Wheeler became the senior cavalry general of the armies of the Confederacy; being then only twenty-eight years old! But he had experienced previous annoyance in the service from his boyish appearance. Pompous and self-appreciating commanders, his seniors in years, were *at first* restive of control by a youth. One high-headed colonel actually resigned, saying:

"I will not serve under that boy!" His name is lost, at this moment; the "boy's" is carved on Fame's most enduring tablet.

The same writer recalls a familiar example of the general's delicacy and generosity, told by a private at one of the reunions. At an inspection of his command he accompanied the inspector on his rounds. One trooper did not unbutton his coat; the inspector reproved and the soldier blushed in embarrassment. Wheeler at once divined its cause, whispered a word to the inspector, and he passed on. The poor fellow had on no shirt; and immediately on return to his quarters, his general sent him the last one he had in his kit!

When armies give nicknames to their leaders, their style shows the love, or dislike, out of which they are born. "Little Phil" and "Little Joe"



From a special wash drawing made by H. P. Ijams.

MRS. GENERAL GRANT GREETING GENERAL WHEELER ON
RETURN FROM CUBA.

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are equally terms of endearment; both derived from physical causes. So was the ever-remembered "Point"; but Wheeler's boys had other names for him. The "Bee Hunter" came from his habit of looking up into the trees as he rode along, as though watching for "gums." Their favorite *soubriquet* was the "War Child"; and when he would sally forth for a nocturnal dash, the whisper ran down the line: "The War Child rides to-night!"

XII.—SANTIAGO TO MONTAUK.

It is not yet quite assured that it will not puzzle the pundit of the future, taking pen for the history of the war with Spain, to write his preface. The deeper he gets into his process of sifting *ante-bellum* facts, the less will he be able to explain definitely what the war was about. But this is not the place—nor is the writer a competent one—to volunteer for fumbling at the Gordian knot of cause, in behalf of the far-futured Macaulay.

With no desire to anticipate history, a glance must be taken of the Santiago campaign; and any view of it must be largely filled with the big little man. All that was the legitimate child of fitness and circumstance; and precedent pages have been writ-

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ten wholly in vain if their reader is not prepared to understand—from the bare *facts*—why the once-noted Confederate pressed to the forefront now.

It were needless to restate how he was the first to offer that long-sheathed, but unruined, sword to the president; how he went to the front with a youthful promptitude surprising in any man, but wonderful in one of his years and later routine; or how—once more in harness—the soldier-fire within glowed and blazed into undimmed flame.

It will be remembered that President McKinley appointed Wheeler and Fitzhugh Lee major-generals on the evening of May 2d, 1898. There was no session of the senate next day; but on the 4th the nominations were unanimously confirmed. Five days later General Wheeler was ordered by General Miles to report for immediate assignment to General Brooke, at Chickamauga. In “Wheeler’s way” he lost no time in preparation, but reported at Camp Thomas within thirty hours; the very next day receiving his order for Tampa.

This was received at 2. P. M. On the 2:07 P. M. train was the new commander of the cavalry, *en-route* for Tampa, where he reported next day. His own book quietly says:

“When orders from Washington were received assigning me to the command of the cavalry division, I immediately pitched my tent with the com-

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mand and directed myself to inspection and other means of becoming familiar with the officers and men. In less than three days I had looked squarely in the face of every man in the command. I attended the drills and soon saw that the command was one of which I could be justly proud."

The reader is spared details of the long, repeated and sickening delays at Tampa; the orders and counter-orders that burthened the wires, "balled up" the transports and demoralized the men. But at last only on June 7th—after his hasty rush to join "the expedition now leaving," on May 12th—General Wheeler and his staff, with a part of his cavalry division, boarded the transport "Alleghany." The "Flying Dutchman" of Spain had been seen, by too sharp eyes, off the Florida coast; and it was only on June 14th that the expedition got off,

The fact of the arrival of the transport fleet and of its disembarkation at Balquiri is familiar to the public; but there are many points unknown—both as to this and the first battle—on which General Wheeler's book throws a searchlight. Most interesting of these are how the little general got in the van at Guasimas, and saved the San Juan fight.

Neither of these was planned by the heads of that remarkable, and almost unplanned, campaign; but they were not "accident," as has been so glibly stated—any more than was the Guasimas fight the alleged "ambush." They grew out of the alertness

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and military instinct of their hero, and gave him the post of honor that Shafter had reserved for Lawton. For the latter's division was ordered to disembark first, although Wheeler was second in command to Shafter.

While the boats of the navy were ready to "surf" the men in, the transports—after the rule of such craft—kept too far out for landing. Wheeler chafed under the delay; he was crazy to get ashore. Suddenly a small fleet of navy boats closed around the "Alleghany," their officer asking:

"Are you the next to disembark?"

"We are all ready!" was Wheeler's prompt reply; and its result was that eight hundred of his cavalry were on Cuban soil, before some of Lawton's. This was June 22d; and the next morning, Wheeler was directed by Shafter to throw out pickets as far as Siboney; and, all of his men being now ashore, he pushed on to examine the ground, riding far ahead of his column, almost unattended.

Under his orders, Young left Balquiri at 4:30 p. m., with the "Rough Riders" and a squadron of 10th U. S. cavalry, carrying four Hotchkiss guns. *He passed through and beyond Lawton's infantry division—encamped in the neck of the valley; thus becoming the van of the army of occupation!*

Meantime General Wheeler had promptly ridden out to examine the conditions for himself; and

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now, returning, ordered Young to march out at dawn for a reconnoissance in force towards Guasimas. Under this order Wood's Rough Riders took the trail over the hill at daybreak, June 24th; Young himself leading the regulars up the valley road. *Both commanders had detailed instructions, in case of the probable fight they expected.*

This much of detail is given in disproof of the swift statements at the time, and their repetition since, that they marched into "an ambushade." On the contrary, Wheeler sent them to meet and dislodge the advance of the Spanish army, barring Shafter's way to Santiago. The splendid valor and constancy of those soldiers—fighting an unseen foe in a strange field; strung out in disorganizing single file, torn with cactus and parched with tropic sun—is now a national anthem. But they won their great victory, and suffered their heavy loss, *not* from being "ambushed," but carrying out the strategic plan of their clear-headed general.

The crack of Hotchkiss guns, heard in Lawton's tent, was his first intimation that the first battle of the war was on, and that Wheeler's division was fighting it. And the movement—with its brilliant, if bloody result—was still more surprising news to General Shafter far away. It had upset what "plan" he may have had for the advance; but it had won, for all that, and had put his army in the

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straight—and unobstructed—road to Santiago! In his report to General Corbin, Shafter says:

“The orders for June 24 contemplated General Lawton’s division taking a strong defensive position a short distance from Siboney, on the road to Santiago; Kent’s division was to be held near Siboney, where he disembarked; Bates’ brigade was to take position in support of Lawton, while Wheeler’s division was to be somewhat to the rear, on the road to Balquiri.”

This was the “plan” Wheeler’s war instinct upset, by winning a victory while his commanding general was *arranging* for one. But Shafter’s dispatch, already quoted, endorses him:

“The engagement had an inspiring effect upon our men, and doubtless correspondingly depressed the enemy, as it was now plainly demonstrated to them that they had a foe to meet who would advance under a heavy fire from intrenchments.”

He adds that the victory gave the army a well watered country further to the front, “on which to encamp our troops.” So it comes to this: Young followed Wheeler’s instructions; and Wheeler, who had received no specific orders, executed his judgment as a veteran soldier and engaged the foe.

There has been no point yet advanced to show that Wheeler acted “in direct violation of orders,” as General Miles was led to suspect. On the contrary, all facts prove indisputably this: He was the ranking officer ashore; he had been directed to

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make a reconnoissance and feel the enemy. His ideas of a reconnoissance were that you must get near enough to your enemy to see him; and then that you can feel him best by making him feel you. General Shafter agreed; for Adjutant-General McClernaud wrote from the steamship "Seguranca," at 1 P. M. on the 24th of June:

"The commanding general directs me to say that he is glad to hear such good news and that you are occupying the enemy's ground."

But, in spite of saccharine words, General Shafter does not appear to have been too pleased at the audacious dash and far-seeing "war-childhood" that took the first glory of the Cuban campaign away from him and his. Wheeler was left severely alone in command of the cavalry; and it is not of record that he was consulted, or called into council, for the attack on San Juan. It was the tramp of troops passing to the attack that gave the sick warrior his first intimation of the great battle in prospect. He rose from his cot, ordered an ambulance and started for the front. But the fever of war was too much for the fever of climate, and he soon roared out for his horse and, spite of protestations, was assisted to saddle and led his division.

He was in charge of the left wing of the army at San Juan, and led the advance upon the entrenched hill-top, carried and held it—and *won the fight*.

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Then it was that the ground gained had to be held. The line to hold it was so thin—the decimation of fire, fever and fatigue so great—that Shafter urged the necessity of falling back upon the coast to await reinforcements. It is said that *one* of his despatches—the most urgent one—was never printed. It is only necessary to read the two that were; to compare the jubilant echo of “A Hot time in the Old Town” with the indigo hue of the other, to be assured of some strong tonic administered to the adipose commander.

Wheeler promptly protested, both by letter and in person, against one inch of retrograde. He showed that every backward step meant redoubled loss and effort to regain later; that it would dispirit our own tired men; inspire the enemy and give him time to refortify his points proved weakest to him. Shafter would not listen. He appealed to the War department. It sustained Wheeler’s view!

Santiago was won by Wheeler’s judgment—shown from first to last—as much as by fighting.

Then came the return; those days at Montauk, when the President saw with his own eyes that “some one had blundered.” He felt the dire need of the clearest head, of the most prompt decision and of the ripest experience he could command. He found them concentrated in the little general of two wars; and into the hands of Joseph Wheeler



CAPTAIN JOE WHEELER, JR.

As Cadet at West Point — The "Chip of the Old
Block," who was Aide-de-Camp to his
Father in Cuba.

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he put unreservedly the cleaning of that Augean stable, overpiled with noisome incompetence and overflowing with evil contagion. The result is too close under the public eye to need new comment.

How Wheeler labored, how his whole family labored with him there, and how they felt together the awful touch of His hand, that makes that fair shore black to their eyes—all know.

Thence—when there was no longer a Camp Wikoff, its commander was sent to Huntsville, to take charge of that camp. There he was on his own familiar ground. But his restless energy found plenty to exercise it, in remodeling the great camp and improving its sanitary regulations.

At Huntsville, Wheeler became the idol of the volunteers, who had before only heard of him; and the “cits” could not do enough to express their love and respect. The magnificent black thoroughbred, and rich accoutrements, presented him are but one “outward and visible sign” of this.

Thence he went back to Washington, to take that seat in Congress to which he had been sent with exceptional unanimity, while fighting a far different campaign on a far-away shore. The president made mandatory objection: the soldier obeyed. And there showed that inexplicable desire to “down” him, which from occult cause exists in some breasts covered by the blue, and some by the black.

XIII.—THE MAN, TO-DAY.

General Wheeler weighs about 118 pounds, and stands five feet and five inches in his boots.

To-day he stands higher, perhaps, than any man in this country in the hearts of its people, and in the estimate of "men of wisest censure."

If it may not be said strictly "nothing in the life" of the Fifty-Fifth Congress "became it like the leaving it," indisputably none of its acts has given more universal satisfaction than has the retention in his seat of the *gentleman* from Alabama. That was practical legislation for political economy; it did "the greatest good to the greatest number."

It is no part of narrative to discuss *motives* of men other than its direct subject; but no statement of fact about General Wheeler's present could be complete without reference to the later-existent struggle to oust him from his seat. And it is cold truth that not alone his own constituents regret whatever overstrained construction of "duty" it may have been that made the "leader" of his own party a new Peter the Hermit—leading a crusade.

Ah! he was a great diplomatist and statesman who declared a mistake to be far worse than—a crime! For, whatever may be the strict construc-

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tion of "laws, rusting in antique sheaths," their upsetting this time has popular approval.

There is nothing that Joseph Wheeler—or any other patriot, dead or living—has ever done, which should exempt him from infraction of *lex scripta*, or of the law of usage. But when *constructive* violation of a desuetudinous act comes from obedience to the will of the highest authority in the land; and when that will but voices the will of the people that gives it power to speak; when obedience springs from pure desire to serve the State, at the cost of double labor and double responsibility—then the heart of a Nation must beat approval of the law-breaking, and in full sympathy with the innocent law-breaker.

That popular surprise—not unmixed with popular indignation—that has found vent through pen and brush, without regard to section or tenet, means:

When the "Leader" kicks at the Wheeler, it is safer to unhitch "the Texas steer!"

Nothing since the declaration of war has excited more widespread interest than this sudden blow aimed at the popular idol; the unexpected source from which it came, and the inexplicable alliance of influences it begot. Nothing since the peace has made more friends—for the man struck.

Yet, in the hour of his triumph, the dignified and earnest man whose virtues won it at the hands of

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friends and old foes, spoke no words of bitterness—even of self-gratulation. For *Væ victis* never was written in Joseph Wheeler's life-creed; and it was more in sadness that he told the interviewer:

“No one knows how the effort to unseat me, coming from my own side of the house, has hurt. It struck me here,” he placed his hand on his heart. “In order to accomplish this end, those who had it in charge have tried to reflect upon my integrity as a democrat, making it appear by innuendo that I had forsaken the principles of my party. That is what hurt. I was never a better democrat in my life, and never believed more firmly in the principles of my party. Had the house acted differently from what it did, I would have felt as a knight might who had some stain placed on his escutcheon. But what pleases me more than aught else is the fact that so many of my own party, both young and old, voted against considering the question.”

Small wonder indeed that: “The president was highly pleased at the action of the house, and sent his congratulations to the little hero.” That action vindicated the president as well; both in his power of selection and in his construction of law. He will not heed interested army “kickers” now.

This persecution has made the man more of a hero than ever. Risking tautology, it may be said that no name had of late years been more often on the popular tongue than Joseph Wheeler. His old history has been rewritten and reread; his recent

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history made a twice-told tale. His personality, his private life and the simplest stories about him have been discussed in every varied form. Those nearest and dearest to him—whose gentle lives have naught to do with affairs—have been made, if lovingly, a sort of public property.

The recent peace jubilees and the presidential visits, West, East and South, showed the deep, firm hold the general's personality has upon the people. Retiring as he is, the cheers that greeted him everywhere were louder and more enthusiastic than those even which met the head of the nation.

The close relations of confidence and mutual esteem between him and the president have grown naturally out of mutual understanding by each of the better traits of the other. True men show in trying moments, as under the X-ray; and these two have *seen* each other. That their knowledge thus gained has caused misconstruction is natural.

"For there's little to earn and many to keep," and party lines may not be crossed without suspicion from small souls. It has even been hinted that he had ambitions for the second place upon the *McKinley presidential ticket!*

Lately this *betise* was put to this author, and his belief of its possibility asked, by a sensible and cultured man. Naturally, the reply was:

"I like the ticket: it is as national, as impossi-

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ble. But how would this one do: George Dewey, of Vermont and Manila, and Joseph Wheeler, of Georgia, New York, Alabama and Santiago?"

Now, too, fly rumors that Wheeler is to be sent to Manila; and that his daughter is to go with him. To this writing they remain rumors: they *may* be the forerunners of a possibility. Should the president see the best use for the general there, he will go to Deweyland as he went to Cuba. To paraphrase the *Tribune's* words, already quoted:

"No place where the flag flies is too hot for 'Joe Wheeler'; and where he goes, the hearts of the American people must likewise go!"

There, too, would go the heart—if cause held her active body absent—of his loyal and helpful daughter. For the twain are one in sympathy, in sentiment and in soul. He is her idol. When he went to new duties and dangers in May last, that gentle heart spoke to him those words of Ruth:

"Entreat me not to leave thee, nor return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go, where thou lodgest I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God. May the Lord do so unto me and more also, if aught but Death part me and thee."

XIV.—WHEELER'S GREATEST VICTORY.

The greatest victories are ever moral ones ; those that are won by no single act of any man, but by a crystallization of all the acts of his life. Thus the moral victory of General Wheeler's retention in congress overshadows even those of his good sword.

The vote was truly a phenomenal one. The two-thirds majority—146 to 77—was in no sense a party, or even a political one. It comprised 101 republicans, 44 democrats and 1 populist, as against 43 democrats, 21 republicans and 13 populists.

It was not a vote upon his actual retention ; it simply brushed aside the possibility of even considering Wheeler's ejection ; and to do this, democrats promptly ignored "leadership" they could not follow ; republicans released their windpipes from the velvet glove over their Czar's iron hand.

And Joseph Wheeler's reception of that ovation of the ballot—like his port after it, under gross provocation—was simply perfect.

When the little congressman left his seat on Russian leather, to resume his seat on "pigskin," on May 9th last, his colleagues in congress gathered about him in a leave-taking that was warmed by genuine feeling, if saddened by some apprehension. The first was spoken in frank and touching words ; the other by the grave faces of his friends. For it

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was believed by many that this parting was final. They thought the wiry sexegenarian an old man—and feared he would never return from the hardships of active campaign in such a climate.

It is a notable fact that Speaker Reed—with that adopted *bonhomme* he uses when so minded, cheered the doubters with the epigrammatic profanity :

“Don’t worry about Wheeler : he never stays in one place long enough for God Almighty to put His finger on him.”

On the 4th day of the March succeeding, when the speaker of the house tried *his* finger on the re-ordained representative, it were logical deduction from his own words to assume that Mr. Reed felt himself superior to the Godhead !

Consensus of opinion seems to be that Mr. Bailey, of Texas, made another large mistake, when his pettishness caused him to throw up his “leadership” of “followers” who would not be led. It avers that in declaring that they voted “against their own party,” Mr. Bailey somewhat confused the party and his own proper person. “*L’etat, c’est moi*” was never democratic doctrine.

But public opinion has not so far recalled Mr. Speaker Reed’s *bon mot*, as to discuss his possible differentiation of himself and Deity.

Yet somehow the little man escaped from the crushing finger of the “biggest” one ; and on the



WHEELER ON PEACE PARADE.

Leading Wheeler's Old Cavalry at Atlanta Jubilee, Dec. 15, 1898.

WHEELER'S GREATEST VICTORY.

morning succeeding any man who read, in all broad Anglo-Saxondom, "could put his finger" on the speaker of the fifty-fifth house.

Gagged by old parliamentary usage, that "Reed rule" made as of the Medes and Persians, Joseph Wheeler spoke to the world from the forum of an "unparliamentary" press.

And the world *heard* this:

"Seeing there was nothing to be done in the house, I asked unanimous consent to speak for five minutes. I was not recognized, but Mr. Payne was notified to move a recess of five minutes. I then asked that before that motion was put that I be permitted to address the house for three minutes. If the speaker had submitted to my request, I am confident no member of the house would have objected. What I intended to say was as follows:

"No one reveres the constitution more than myself, and I could not be induced to advocate a construction contrary to the intent of its framers.

"When I received the appointment as major general of volunteers last May, I was requested by persons whose desires I could not disregard not to resign my seat in congress. I found that during the present congress thirty-three of its members had been appointed to offices and that none of them had resigned their seats in congress. I examined the decisions and precedents on the subject and found that during the 110 years of the existence of our government hundreds, and possibly thousands, of the members of congress had accepted offices during their terms; and that none of them, holding

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temporary offices like mine, had ever been unseated. I found that the decisions of the courts—even including four decisions quoted by General Henderson in his report—take the ground that the inhibitions found in the constitution with regard to officers referred to offices of a permanent character and not of a temporary character. I also found that the attorney general of the United States had rendered an elaborate opinion on the subject. He took precisely the same ground and held that an office in the volunteers was not such an office as was inhibited by the constitution. I was anxious for the matter to be brought up in the house and fully discussed, so that the decision would be in harmony with the spirit of the constitution.”

The writer knows that there is no North, no South, no East, no West—except in the geography: this *is* the era of “peace and good will,” of jubilee, and of hip! hip! hurrah! But he knows, too, that there is good, red blood in all American veins; and that it *is* “thicker than water.” He knows that when a moribund congress sings “America,” the hearts of the singers *feel* “Home, Sweet Home!”

So, at that late jubilant funeral of sectional rancor, we of the South have occasion to thank the God of battles—the God of the South, as of all the land—that its closing moment called forth the wildest and most heartfelt cheers for the two most worthy, most trusted and most beloved sons of America—George Dewey, of Vermont, and Joseph Wheeler, of Alabama.

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But a moment before, the speaker of the house had given the eager and nervous representative of the "old eighth" Alabama district his most basaliskian stare, in place of "recognition."

Mr. Reed forgot that the demand was made and repeated by his peer—at any time; by one whose dignified reticence from every prerogative of membership, while it was assailed, had raised him higher than the speaker's chair. Mr. Reed's ever-strong brain was dizzied by sweet strength of the verbal *mescal*, just poured for his quaffing by the hand of the Texan "leader." He could not hear Wheeler's call for *justice* through the titillant echoes of his own praise.

But the little general is not of the kind to be turned to stone by the eye of mortal, bear he gavel, or sword, in hand. He was not permitted the scant courtesy of speech for three minutes, after voluntary and tasteful silence for more months. But he has spoken to the *country*; and in tone so dignified, so restrained and so true that it will echo to Maine—and beyond.

The Alabamian's prompt public statement will go to the hearts of all Americans—that have red blood in them—from Mr. Reed's northernmost boundary to the Golden Gate—from Cuba to freezing Klondike. For those hearts answered the speaker's stony stare, then and there.

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The overcrowded galleries had just cheered to the echo Mr. Reed's third biennial restatement of his own fidelity to duty, absolute impartiality and rigid adherence to the proprieties. He had said how what heart he has was moved by the noble and tender words of the gentleman from Texas—upon whom he had so frequently felt it his duty to sit down with all his pounds. And then—after saying that he (for he is the office) “has but one superior, and no peer”—he sat himself down, a plump male Niobe; but was blind and deaf to the gentleman from Alabama.

Then the heart of a people—who are one from Maine to Texas—spoke; even as it had been voiced by their true representatives, on the previous day.

Then it had told that people's will; and despite rule and clique and party—even while doubtful of actual law—had found neither time nor inclination to consider the superservicable report that would have vacated Congressman Wheeler's seat.

Now, in the latest moment of its last hour, the mention of Joseph Wheeler's name shook the solid rafters of that house, even as George Dewey's had shaken them the moment before.

But that is Wheeler's way! His life has taught his peers that, under the uniform, they ever will find the Man!

THE END.

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